

Israel clamps down on Gaza produce

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (K) — Palestinian farmers in the occupied Gaza Strip said Israel began restricting sales of their vegetables to the West Bank Wednesday, putting a new economic squeeze on residents. Salim Abu Salma, a farmer from Deir Al Balah town in the Gaza Strip, said Israeli authorities refused to issue permits for sending Arab produce to the West Bank because the farmers were selling their produce in Israel instead. "I believe that Israel is trying to impose economic pressures on us," said Abu Salma, who previously headed the Gaza Strip's Vegetable Marketing Society. Israel requires Gaza Strip farmers to obtain special permits to cross an army-guarded checkpoint between the Gaza Strip and Israel on their way to the West Bank. Palestinians said the ban would result in serious losses to Gaza Strip farmers who market up to 100 tonnes of their vegetables, or 70 per cent of the Strip's daily output, in the West Bank.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة باللغة العربية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

S. Arabia, Oman sign border pact

RIYADH (AP) — The rulers of Saudi Arabia and Oman Wednesday signed an agreement demarcating their common border, which had remained officially undefined since colonial times. An official announcement in Riyadh and Muscat said King Fahd and Sultan Qaboos had their signatures to the accord at 4:10 p.m. (1310 GMT) on the basis of the "declared line," that is, the border already roughly existing. It said annexes to the agreement, signed by the interior ministers of the kingdom and the sultanate, defined pasture areas and organized traffic points along the 610-kilometre border. The announcement said the pact would insure "a basis of equality and mutual interest and the guaranteeing of the rights of sovereignty for each of the two sister states." The national news agencies of the two countries quoted the two rulers as describing the event as "a historic day," and stressing "historical brotherly ties" between the two countries. King Fahd additionally paid tribute to the development of ties with Oman in the two decades of Qaboos' rule. The event took place at the northeastern town of Hafaf Al Batain, where Qaboos arrived Tuesday for the purpose of finalizing the border accord and for talks with Fahd on a range of issues.

Volume 15 Number 4347

AMMAN THURSDAY-FRIDAY, MARCH 22-23, 1990, SHA'BAN 25-26, 1410

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

Policeman killed by drug smugglers

AMMAN (Petra) — A policeman was killed Monday in a shootout with drug smugglers, police said. A police spokesman, quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that police seized a large amount of hashish which was supposed to be transferred to a neighbouring Arab country. He said that the anti-narcotics department organised an operation to arrest the smugglers flagrante delicto. In the operation, the smugglers started shooting, killing Lieutenant Ahmad Abdul Karim Sukhni, the spokesman said. After the clashes, several smugglers were arrested and a large amount of drugs was seized, he said.

Qian in India

NEW DELHI (AP) — Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen arrived in New Delhi Wednesday to hold talks with Indian leaders on their disputed frontier. Qian is the first senior Chinese official to visit India since Prime Minister V.P. Singh took office 3½ months ago. Qian landed in the western port city of Bombay Tuesday to inaugurate the office of the India-China Chamber of Commerce. He toured the Taj Mahal in Agra Wednesday before coming to the Indian capital.

Iran-Soviet border gates opened

NICOSIA (AP) — Iranian-Soviet border gates that blocked a wooden bridge over the Aras River in the city of Yolla swung open Wednesday for the first time in 73 years, Tehran Radio reported. The state-run radio said the people who poured across the bridge were the first officially sanctioned Soviet Azeri Muslim visitors to the Islamic republic under an agreement to open the border after violent demonstrations in January. The radio report, monitored in Nicosia, said the bridge was unblocked to mark the Muslim new year of 1369 that started Wednesday. The gates will remain open for three more days to commemorate the holiday, it said.

Mongolia elects new leaders

ULAN BATOR (R) — Mongolia's parliament chose its foreign trade minister and the initiator of the country's open door policy as its president Wednesday, shortly after accepting the resignation of former President Zhambyn Batmunkh. Punsalmaagiyn Ochirbat, 47, was chosen at the first day of a session that also tapped Sharavyn Gunjaadorj, an agricultural specialist, to succeed Dumaagiyn Sodnom as prime minister. Both the new president and prime minister are members of the ruling Communist Party but apparently do not hold top posts.

Sudan court fails to hold hearing

KHARTOUM (R) — A Sudanese court due to decide whether five Palestinians should die for killing five Britons and two Sudanese in 1988 failed to meet as scheduled on Wednesday. Journalists who went to the court said they said the court did not convene and there was no explanation for the delay. Earlier this month, the court said that after considering the views of relatives of the British victims it would meet on March 21 to decide on the fate of the five Palestinians who had been sentenced to death. Last September, the court left it to the families of the victims to decide whether the five should be executed, pardoned or ordered to pay blood money.

Iran leaves 'U.S., Britain out in cold'

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said Wednesday once-hostile nations were racing to befriend Tehran but the United States and Britain were being left out in the cold. In a message marking Iranian new year reported by the official news agency IRNA, Rafsanjani urged people who have left Iran since the revolution of 1979 to return. The economy was moving forward, he said, vowing to press ahead vigorously with a five-year development plan.

CBJ reserves expected to be raised to \$650 million by end of this year

Jardaneh confident of meeting targets

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Writer

AMMAN — The present foreign exchange reserve of \$380 million at the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) is very encouraging and the Kingdom is confident that it could be raised to \$650 million by the end of the year, Finance Minister Basel Jardaneh said Wednesday.

Jardaneh also said the present exchange rate of the Jordanian dinar was "very realistic and appropriate" and that "there is no demand for any change" in the rate.

Addressing an informal briefing for reporters, Jardaneh said Jordan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were near agreement on finalising the next phase of the Kingdom's economic restructuring programme.

Finalisation of the agreement, which follows an informal visit to Jordan by an IMF delegation earlier this month, will release \$44 million in IMF standby credits to Jordan in four tranches of \$11 million each, he said.

The foreign exchange reserve at the Central Bank stood at \$500 million at the end of 1989, and was reduced to \$380 million by March since the Kingdom had to meet interest in arrears on its external loans, according to the minister. "A substantial amount of interest due in 1989 was not paid since we could not agree on terms of (rescheduling)," he said.



Basel Jardaneh

"Now, some of the bilateral agreements have been signed and we have paid all interest in arrears to the London Club" of creditor banks, but there are some outstanding payments to the Paris Club of creditor governments. He did not provide any figures.

The minister voiced confidence that Jordan would meet its target of receiving \$750 million in Arab aid and foreign loans, and be able to raise its reserves to \$650 million by the end of the year under a "foreign exchange programme already worked out."

He explained that the Kingdom expected a minimum of \$360 million in Arab financial assistance — "we are sure that it will be more," he said without giving specific commitments — and the

rest in the form of a \$150 million loan from the World Bank, another loan of \$150 million from Japan and the \$44 million IMF standby credit.

The present foreign exchange reserve of \$380 million includes mandatory deposits at the Central Bank from commercial banks, he said. He did not give any breakdowns, but said the total of such commercial bank deposits was in the range of \$260 million to \$280 million.

During the expected visit of the IMF delegation in April, Jordan and the fund will also prepare a medium-term economic programme lasting until the year 1993, he said.

Jordan has concluded bilateral debt rescheduling agreements with all concerned members of the Paris Club except Britain, Belgium and Sweden, he said, adding that the Kingdom expected to sign a final rescheduling agreement with the London Club in April.

He said Jordan could only hope for marginal relief from the Brady plan of writing-off debts of developing countries since commercial banks accounted for only 13 per cent of its debts.

Also, he added, Jordan could not hope to gain from the Toronto Protocol applicable to poor debtor countries since the Kingdom's per capita income was above the \$800 set as basic qualifying point under the agreement.

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Finance minister braced to defend income tax law on House floor

By Saleem Ne'matt
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Finance Minister Basel Jardaneh said Wednesday he was prepared for a battle with the Lower House of Parliament today to convince deputies to vote against House's Finance Committee amendments to the income tax law.

Jardaneh said the amendments, offering more income tax exemptions, would result in a JD 20 million increase in the budget deficit and would force the government to increase custom duties to compensate for the loss.

The minister told reporters the government plans to increase income and consumption tax rather than custom duties to establish a base for the Kingdom's economy in the 1990s.

"There is too much dependence on customs," Jardaneh said. "We have to depend more on income and consumption tax."

Jardaneh, who will address the House today to argue against the Finance Committee's amendment, said the government's proposal to increase corporate

tax from 35 per cent to 40 per cent would result in a JD 8.8 million increase in revenues.

Income Tax Department Director General Salmaan Tarawneh told the Jordan Times Wednesday that his department collected more taxes than ever due to a boom in exports, an increase in profits by banks and financial companies and a tighter tax collection system.

Tarawneh confirmed that the department collected JD 77.5 million in taxes until March 20 compared with JD 22 million in the same period last year.

He said the reason behind the higher revenues was an increase in industrial exports such as phosphates and more profits for banks and financial institutions. He said that an improvement in tax collection management has also contributed to higher revenues.

Tarawneh said that many industries have entered under the income tax umbrella last year after the expiry of the exemption period granted in 1983 and 1984 as part of the investment incentives law.

He added that the JD 77.5

million revenues figure until March 20 could not be taken as a measure of revenues for the entire year. He explained that most major companies pay most of their taxes in January and February to benefit from the reduction offered for early payment.

Tarawneh said a small part of the increase could be attributed to last year's amendment in the tax law (article 40) which he said was enacted only as of Nov. 1, 1989.

He said he expected an increase in total tax revenues over an above the JD 100 million projected in the 1990 national budget. Jardaneh said the figure could reach JD 120 million.

Tarawneh refused to comment on Jardaneh's estimation that the treasury would suffer a JD 20 million loss if the Finance Committee's amendments were to be endorsed by the House.

Last Sunday, the House decided to resume discussions of the Finance Committee's amendment after Jardaneh said the amendments would result in a wider budget deficit and higher custom duties.

Kohl sponsors East German coalition talks in Bonn

BONN (Agencies) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl was discussing German unification Wednesday night with East German conservative leaders who won a resounding victory in their country's first free elections.

Kohl is anxious to make good his promises to East German voters during the election campaign that Bonn would act swiftly to improve their lives by introducing its powerful currency and extending its welfare system to East Germany.

"We must not disappoint the expectations of the citizens and voters of East Germany. The confidence and trust people have put in us and our policies must be justified," Kohl said this week.

Government sources said Kohl's late-night talks in Bonn with East German Christian Democratic (CDU) leader Lothar de Maiziere and other

conservative politicians were to concentrate on the new laws needed to implement currency, economic and social union.

The CDU heads the three-party Alliance for Germany, which won 48 per cent of the vote in Sunday's East German elections, and de Maiziere is likely to become prime minister.

Bonn expects the new East German government to announce a comprehensive legislative programme in its first statements of policy, probably at the beginning of April.

The CDU package would include protection of private property and investments, and freedom to start new businesses as well as changes in the tax system and trade union legislation, the government sources said.

CDU economic adviser Gerd Koenig said that if the laws all go

through on schedule, preparations for introducing the West German mark as legal tender in East Germany could start in May.

But the alliance would need the backing of East Germany's Social Democratic Party (SPD), which has rejected coalition overtures.

NATO role

Most Warsaw Pact countries support NATO membership for a united Germany, leaving the Soviet Union virtually isolated among its allies, a senior U.S. official said Wednesday.

The official, accompanying U.S. Secretary of State James Baker at Namibia's independence celebrations, said most of the Soviet Union's East bloc allies were clearly opposed to the Kremlin position that a unified Germany should be neutral.

Panels to probe 9 cases of corruption

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government, acting on a request from Parliament, has referred nine cases of corruption to the public prosecutor. Wednesday to investigate possible corruption, the Jordan News Agency, Petra said.

Justice Minister Youssef Mubdeeen was quoted as saying by Petra a judicial inquiry would start Thursday.

Five committees, each with a judge helped by officials from relevant ministries, the Audit Bureau and the Central Bank of Jordan, would examine the contracts.

The 90-seat Lower House of Parliament, vowing to fight corruption and economic crime, referred the cases with supporting documents to Prime Minister Mudar Badran for action after a closed session Tuesday.

The cases were said to include a sale of Central Bank of Jordan's gold holdings, the Abu Nusair housing project, the Jubelha amusement park project, the Jafr-Azraq road project, the Swaga prison project, food tenders and projects of the Jordan Valley Authority.

"The investigation committees have been granted full authority to delve deep into the problems and pursue all channels required in the course of investigation to determine the identity of persons connected to the corruption cases," Mubdeeen told Petra.

"Justice will take its course, and only those actually involved and found guilty will be affected as proved by the committee's investigations," the minister added.

Namibia is free

WINDHOEK (R) — Namibia broke the shackles of more than a century of colonial rule Wednesday when tens of thousands of joyous people danced in the streets to usher in the country's independence.

The world's newest nation, which became the 160th member of the United Nations, launched a massive street party to mark the end of colonial domination, first from Imperial Germany and since 1915 from neighbouring South Africa.

President Sam Nujoma and his cabinet were installed in solemn ceremonies by U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, whose peacekeeping forces were instrumental in securing a peaceful transition to independence. (See page 8).

Peres begins uphill task

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Labour Party leader Shimon Peres Wednesday began the delicate task of forming a new government he says will pursue peace with the Palestinians.

Immediately after President Chaim Herzog gave him the mandate, Peres met with members of the ultra-orthodox party Agudat Israel to try to win their support.

In order to get the 61 supporters needed to gain control of the 120-seat parliament, Peres must convince the ultra-orthodox factions to join with leftist parties. Orthodox parties in the past have demanded tougher laws to deal with restaurants and stores that open on the Sabbath, a major source of friction with liberal factions.

Peres, 66, already has the largest bloc in the Knesset, or parliament — 39 Labour legislators. The largest rival is his former coalition partner, the right-wing Likud with 35 seats.

Likud campaigned to block Peres from forming a new government, calling his plan for peace talks with Palestinians a threat to Israel's existence.

Peres has three weeks to find coalition partners giving him the needed 61 seats.

Caretaker Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, the Likud leader, turned down an overture from Peres to join a new administration headed by Labour, and his supporters went on the offensive.

"We certainly have in Likud a very deep concern that the direction the Labour Party is taking will bring about the creation of a Palestinian state, which we see as a disaster for our existence," said Shamir's transport minister, Moshe Katsav.

"We can't be partners in a government led by Labour," Katsav told Israel Radio.

Peres withdrew his Labour Party from coalition with Shamir over his refusal to start Israeli-Palestinian talks and led the vote in the Knesset that defeated the government last Thursday.

Moments after being asked to form a new government, Peres announced his intention to accept a U.S. proposal for opening talks with Palestinians in Cairo that could end their 27-month-old revolt in the occupied territories.

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100 Palestinians treated after clashes with Israelis

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — More than 100 Palestinians were treated for tear-gas inhalation and minor wounds after a clash with Israeli soldiers Wednesday, a hospital in the occupied West Bank said.

"This is the largest number of patients we have ever treated in a single day," said a doctor at the United Nations-run hospital.

Palestinians said those treated were among a large crowd in the occupied West Bank town of Qalqiya who marched towards a school after soldiers surrounded 600 students staging a sit-in inside the playground.

An Israeli spokesman said one Palestinian was hit by a rubber bullet and only one person suffered tear-gas inhalation. Several were hurt by stones thrown by fellow Palestinians, he said.

The doctor at the small Qalqiya hospital, who asked not to be identified, said more than 100 Palestinians suffered tear-gas inhalation, two had wounds from rubber bullets and four had been hit by stones.

Residents said students in the

school courtyard were marking the anniversary of the 1968 Al Karamah battle.

They were also demanding that classes start one hour earlier to match the Palestinian "summer time" called by the leaders of the 27-month-old uprising in the occupied territories.

Until Israel changes its clocks March 24 government-run Palestinian schools are obliged to run according to Israeli time.

Israeli soldiers also used tear-gas against demonstrating students in the West Bank town of Jenin and Ramallah, but no injuries were reported.

A 10-year-old boy from the village of Dhaanabeh, Shukri Hassan Barakat, died Tuesday night in a hospital after he was shot in the head by Israeli soldiers during clashes, sources said.

He was the seventh Palestinian killed by Israeli forces this month. Two Gaza Strip residents died in hospitals on Monday from wounds suffered during earlier clashes.

In the occupied Gaza Strip, a 40-year-old Arab, Ahmed Khalil

Emsabeh, was shot dead in the market of Khan Younis Wednesday. Palestinians said he was a drug dealer suspected by nationalists of being an Israeli informer.

Elsewhere in Gaza, soldiers shot and wounded five Palestinians during stone-throwing incidents, hospitals reported.

The army and witnesses gave conflicting accounts Wednesday on the 10-year-old boy's death in Tulikarm.

The army said in a statement that stones were thrown at soldiers on patrol and that they fired rubber bullets to disperse the youths. "The troops hit one of the youths, and he was later reported to have died," the army said.

Relatives told reporters, however, that Shukri Barakat was standing in the doorway of his home when he was hit with a bullet apparently fired from a nearby rooftop army post. They said they saw no stones thrown. The incident was being investigated by military police, the army spokesman's office said.

Ambassador denies Sweden launching peace initiative

By Sana Attiyeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Swedish Ambassador to Jordan Lars Lonnback Wednesday denied reports that a peace initiative for the Middle East was being launched by Sweden.

"Sweden is not working with any Middle East peace initiative now, and the reports carried by the press are not true," Lonnback told the Jordan Times.

News reports carried by the Saudi newspaper Al Yawm said Tuesday that Sweden would announce its own peace initiative for the region, adding that Swedish officials had contacted officials in Cairo and Amman to brief them on the content of the proposals.

The ambassador said that Sweden was closely following the peace process that is currently taking place, which includes travels and contacts with all parties concerned in the conflict.

In its report, the Saudi paper also reported that Swedish Foreign Minister Sten Andersson's visit to Israel was to discuss the peace initiative, which

was reported to deal with speeding up the peace process, with Israeli officials.

Ambassador Lonnback explained that Anderson's visit to Israel was due to an invitation by the mayor of Tel Aviv to inaugurate a new street there named after a renowned Swedish Jewish World War II personality Raul Wallenberg.

He added that the minister had also talked with Labour Party leader Shimon Peres and Foreign Minister Moshe Arens during his two-day stay in Israel, "but those talks were within the context of what is happening now with the peace process, which did not concern any Swedish initiative." He did not elaborate.

About a reported row between Anderson and Arens over the way the peace process was being stalled by the Israeli government, the ambassador said: "Foreign Minister Arens had the kindness to express some views on the Middle East, which Anderson found to be of no help to the peace process." He said that Anderson was in Israel on his way to Namibia to attend the celebrations of its independence,

where he is presently staying.

American Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, as well as Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat are attending the celebrations of independence in Namibia. Lonnback said he believed that Arafat and Anderson would have talks concerning the peace process.

On developments in the peace process, Lonnback said that it was not expected "to move fast now with what is happening in the Israeli government."

However, the ambassador expressed optimism that if Peres forms a new government, the peace process could be speeded up.

"Peres has indicated that he wants to sit down with the Palestinians for negotiations. So his government could probably make steps in the right direction for a solution," Lonnback said.

But he added that Sweden's final judgement concerning the Israeli position would be made when the new government is formed.

Speculation rife in Beirut of hostage-prisoner exchange

BEIRUT (R) — Speculation is mounting in Lebanon that Arabs imprisoned in Israel may be freed in return for captured Israeli servicemen as part of a complex deal to win the release of Western hostages in Lebanon.

Reports of increased diplomatic efforts to free the 17 Westerners are now being linked to the fate of some 300 Arabs, a Hizbollah cleric seized by Israel in Lebanon last July, and three Israelis captured by guerrillas in South Lebanon.

Talks about the exchange of prisoners started last August. Israel offered to swap about 300 Shi'ites and the cleric, Abdul Karim Obeid, for the Western hostages and three Israeli sol-

diers. The release of Arab prisoners has been a key demand by groups holding the 17 Western hostages in Lebanon. But Hizbollah, which has held the three Israeli servicemen since 1985, said then such an exchange was impossible.

A senior leader of the Iranian-backed Hizbollah (Party of God) told Reuters Tuesday that an end to the hostage drama was in sight but that this depended on the hostage takers getting something in return.

On Wednesday the conservative Al Liwa newspaper, based in west Beirut, put a date on a possible exchange of Palestinian and Lebanese in return for the Israeli prisoners.

Quoting Palestinian sources in Amman, the newspaper said the exchange of prisoners could take place at the beginning of the Holy Month of Ramadan which starts next Tuesday.

There was no independent confirmation of the report. The newspaper said secret contacts have been taking place between the Palestine Liberation Organisation, Hizbollah and Israel through an international party that enjoys good relations with all three.

"These contacts have achieved substantial progress lately which could lead to a prisoner exchange within the coming few days, unless negative factors impede the operation," Al Liwa said.

State Department reports PLO sticking to its pledge

WASHINGTON (R) — The Bush administration told Congress Tuesday that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) had lived up to its 1988 pledge to renounce terrorism.

But the administration expressed concern about violent actions taken by PLO constituent groups and the organisation's failure to dissociate itself from them.

The findings were issued in a State Department report to Congress required under a law enacted last year stemming from the Reagan administration's reversal of long-standing U.S. policy not to talk to the PLO.

That action followed a statement by PLO leader Yasser Arafat renouncing terrorism.

"It is the administration's position that the PLO has adhered to its commitments undertaken in 1988 to renounce terrorism," the report said.

It said actions undertaken by Damascus-based PLO groups had been a problem but added: "We have no evidence that these actions were authorised or approved by the PLO executive committee or Arafat personally."

The State Department said the loosely-structured PLO suffered from deficiencies in controlling

all of its constituent groups, especially those that opposed aspects of current PLO policy and carried out cross-border attacks.

"We are disappointed that the PLO has not found a more authoritative way to distance or dissociate itself from activities undertaken by constituent groups acting independently without the organisation's official sanction," the report said. "We think it important they do so."

It said the United States had told the PLO it would hold the organisation to its commitments and would continue to examine all incidents on a case-by-case basis.

Of almost 30 border and rocket attacks made against Israel by Palestinian groups since December 1988, the report said, nine had involved PLO constituent groups.

Although the United States had no evidence they were ordered by Arafat or the PLO Executive Committee, "we have made it clear to the PLO that

these activities raise serious questions about the PLO's commitment to renounce terrorism," the report said.

It also said that the United States was concerned about the public pronouncements of the PLO, its constituent groups and individual leaders.

"We continue to impress on PLO leaders that they must speak with one voice of their intent to seek a peaceful, negotiated solution (of the Arab-Israel conflict)," it said.

Israel's army chief of staff, contradicting his government's diplomatic offensive against the PLO, said Tuesday the main PLO faction was not launching guerrilla attacks against Israel.

Israeli officials have urged leaders in the United States and Europe to cut ties with the PLO.

But participants in a meeting of parliament's foreign affairs and defence committee quoted Lieutenant-General Dan Shomron as saying:

"Arafat's Fatah (movement) is not operating against Israel from Lebanon or from other regions outside the frontiers of the state."

Fatah is the mainstream PLO group led by Arafat.

Sri Lanka-Arab ties to improve

COLOMBO (R) — The closure of an office representing Israeli interests in Sri Lanka will pave the way for better political and economic ties with the Arab World, government politicians and diplomats said Wednesday.

Parliamentary Speaker Haniffa Mohammad said the closure would help strengthen contacts with Arab countries.

President Ranasinghe Premadasa Tuesday ordered the closure of the Israeli interests office in line with a pledge he made

during presidential polls in 1988. His office said in a statement that Premadasa had asked Foreign Minister Ranjan Wijeratne to close the Israeli office before April 20.

The Israeli section in Colombo regretted the president's decision which it said was made at a time when many nations were establishing relations with Israel, not the reverse.

Sri Lanka cut diplomatic ties with Israel 20 years ago but in 1984 allowed an office represent-

ing Israeli interests to be opened under the auspices of the U.S. embassy.

At that time the government also invited Mossad, the Israeli secret service, to train Sri Lankan security forces in the fight against Tamil separatist guerrillas.

Premadasa said Colombo would resume diplomatic relations with Israel after it recognised the (PLO) as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and withdrew from the occupied territories.

Peres makes dramatic comeback

By Jonathan Karp
Reuter

TEL AVIV — The nomination of Labour Party leader Shimon Peres to form the next government marks a dramatic comeback bid by a once-popular prime minister who pulled Israeli troops out of Lebanon and cut runaway inflation.

The Polish-born Peres, 66, also normalised ties with Egypt during his 25-month term as premier from 1984-1986, earning a reputation as a conciliatory statesman.

Sacked by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir last week for pressing for Israeli-Palestinian talks, Peres may now have the chance to achieve one of the main goals that has eluded him — a breakthrough in Middle East peace.

Peres immediately pledged Tuesday night to work towards the first-ever peace talks with Palestinians in Cairo, proposed by the United States to help end the 27-month-old uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

"We shall reply affirmatively to the proposal and in the wake of this we hope to meet and arrange the talks in Cairo," Peres told reporters.

His failure to win four elections since 1977 has raised doubts about his leadership ability.

His party rival, the hawkish Yitzhak Rabin, once labelled Peres the "indefatigable schemer" for his political man-

oeuvring.

But after becoming prime minister of a broad "national unity" government with Shamir's rightist Likud Party following an inconclusive 1984 general election, Peres attained the highest popularity rating of any recent Israeli premier.

Peres was born on Aug. 16, 1923, in Volozhin in what was then the Polish province of Novogrodek and is now part of the Soviet Union. His family emigrated in 1934.

An articulate if uninspiring speaker, Peres was groomed for leadership by Israel's first leader David Ben-Gurion but was overshadowed by the pioneers and war heroes who dominated the Labour Party.

Having finally gained office in 1984, he agreed to a unique rotation arrangement with Shamir, who became foreign minister, under which they would swap jobs in October 1986.

Despite coalition feuding, he brought the bulk of Israeli troops in Lebanon home in June 1985 and cut annual inflation from 44.9 per cent in 1984 to under 20 per cent in 1986.

On the debit side, he shared responsibility for security scandals during his term, particularly the arrest of U.S. navy analyst Jonathan Pollard as a spy for Israel.

But an opinion poll in mid-1986 found Peres the most popular prime minister since it began regular surveys in 1976,

with 74 per cent of Israeli voters considering him a good leader.

However, after he handed the premiership to Shamir in 1986 under the terms of their coalition, Peres found his former image as a loser and political conspirator returning.

After leading his party to a narrow defeat in November 1986 elections, Peres was forced to accept a subordinate role for Labour in a national unity cabinet led by Shamir, and Peres became vice-premier and finance minister.

Peres persisted in his efforts for peace and Shamir repeatedly accused him of trying to bring down the government by conducting his own foreign policy.

The Likud leader finally fired Peres, prompting a walk-out by Labour ministers and the collapse of the coalition last week. Peres then led the fight that toppled Shamir's government in the first successful no-confidence vote in Israeli history.

Although Peres has now been directed to form Israel's next government, he is starting from a position of little popular strength.

His popularity plunged in the last year — one poll called him the most hated man in Israel — and even Labour doves wanted him replaced as party leader by Rabin, a popular defence minister and pivotal figure in the collapsed coalition government.

Qadhafi calls for Islamic boycott of U.S., allies

ROME (AP) — Libyan leader Col. Muammar Qadhafi called for a Muslim economic boycott of the United States, Britain and West Germany and said no Islamic country should have diplomatic ties with them, according to a reported Tuesday.

Libya has said it suspects the United States and West Germany, along with Israel, were behind last Wednesday's fire at a Libyan plant that allegedly produced poison gas. All three countries have denied any involvement.

In Saudi Arabia, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) declared full solidarity with Libya and strongly denounced what it called threats and pressure against Tripoli.

"Libya has every right to equip itself with the means that will ensure its economic and social progress," the 46-member organisation said in a statement. It said the Rabta fire was of "doubtful origin."

Qadhafi's remarks, carried by the official Libyan News Agency (JANA), made no mention of the fire. The report said Qadhafi accused the United States and its allies of conducting a campaign of subversion against Islamic countries.

It quoted Qadhafi as saying there should be no U.S., British or West German embassies in any Islamic state.

Libya has diplomatic relations with West Germany, but the United States and Britain severed ties with Libya years ago.

Qadhafi was quoted as saying the Muslim World is facing a historic struggle with a "hostile satanic force" and that "no Islamic country should establish relations with the U.S. government and its allies. Rather, we should have a decisive and perpetual boycott against them."

The Agency also said Qadhafi urged Muslims "to work toward withdrawing the Arab oil money piled up in the Jewish banks in America," and called such an effort "a sacred battle."

Libya contends the plant near Rabta, about 96 kilometres southwest of Tripoli, produced pharmaceuticals. The United States and West Germany say it produced poison gas.

Libya's ambassador to Italy, Rahman Shalgam, told Italian journalists Monday that several people suspected of causing the fire had been detained. He also said a "member of the technical staff" apparently set the fire, which he said caused "damage of great proportions."

U.S. officials say the plant is now inoperable.

JANA quoted Qadhafi as saying no ship or plane from the United States, Britain or West Germany should be allowed in "the land of Islam." He appealed to Islamic countries to "boycott completely the forces of evil of this planet."

The United States attacked Libya targets three times in the 1980s, twice shooting down Libyan fighter planes and in 1986 bombing Tripoli and Benghazi to retaliate for what it called Libya's support of "international terrorism."

Some of the U.S. warplanes that attacked Libya in 1986 came from bases in Britain.

U.S. official softens tone on Israeli settlements

WASHINGTON (R) — The Bush administration, apparently softening its tone on Israeli settlements, said Tuesday it would support a plan to guarantee \$400 million in loans for Israel to build housing for Soviet Jewish immigrants if it received adequate assurances on the use of the funds.

Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger said the United States would approach the issue with understanding in negotiations with the Israeli government. He declined to say what assurances were needed.

His remarks were notably softer than earlier statements by President George Bush linking the loan guarantees to new Jewish settlements.

Secretary of State James Baker had said the guarantees were conditional on no settlements being built in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, regardless of whether U.S. loan guarantees were involved.

Bush, in response to a question in Palm Springs, California, on March 3, included settlements in Arab Jerusalem as well as the West Bank.

Bush's statements aroused a furor in Israel, and helped provoke an Israeli government crisis that led to the collapse of the Likud-Labour coalition.

Eagleburger, apparently seeking to calm the controversy, said the administration would support

the housing guarantees "on the assumption we could obtain adequate assurances from the government of Israel on the use of these funds."

Asked what kind of assurances would be acceptable, Eagleburger said he could not be specific. But he said the United States would approach the issue with "understanding" in negotiations with the Israelis.

On a related issue, Eagleburger described as "probably counterproductive" a proposal to have the Senate state that any eased U.S. trade with the Soviet Union should be tied to Moscow's allowing direct flights to take Soviet Jews to Israel.

Senator Arlen Specter said Moscow was yielding to Arab pressure in refusing to allow such flights. His proposed non-binding Senate resolution would link the issue to the provision of so-called most favoured nation (MFN) treatment to Soviet exports.

Eagleburger said the issue had been raised with Soviet officials without success but added that to specifically link MFN with direct flights would make it more difficult for Moscow to change its position.

Specter disclosed that all 100 senators had signed a letter to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev urging him to change his position. An aide said the letter had been sent several weeks ago.

U.N. chief to promote Saharan peace plan

RABAT (R) — Efforts to end one of the world's most stubborn and remote conflicts move up a gear Thursday when U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar arrives in North Africa with a peace plan for Western Sahara.

For much of the last 14 years the desert war between Morocco and Algerian-backed Polisario guerrillas demanding independence has raged away, only occasionally drawing world interest.

The cost, both in money and lives, has been high. Hundreds have been killed and imprisoned and millions of dollars have been pumped into sophisticated arms in a region desperately short of new investment.

Diplomats say Perez de Cuellar, who begins his trip in Morocco, will bring with him firm proposals to hold a self-determination referendum in the former Spanish colony.

On March 11, the Algerian evening daily Horizons quoted the U.N. chief as saying the time was right to end the dispute.

"The international and regional climate has never been so favourable for a just and honourable solution to the Western Sahara question," Perez de Cuellar told the newspaper.

Morocco controls four-fifths of the desert territory, once described as "a God-forsaken scorching desert tract half the size of France with little water and less people."

Polisario operate from a silver of land between Moroccan defence lines and the border with Algeria and Mauritania, but have refugee camps near Tindouf in southwest Algeria.

In August 1988, after Morocco and Algeria restored diplomatic relations severed over the conflict, the two belligerents accepted in principle a U.N. plan to settle the conflict with a referendum.

Since then little or no progress has been made on the mechanics of holding the vote, with each side accusing the other of de-

laying tactics.

Both sides agree on who should vote — the 74,000 people, mainly desert nomads, listed in a 1974 Spanish census — and on the issue, independence or absorption into Morocco.

But they disagree on whether Moroccan administrators, troops and settlers should remain in the run-up to the vote.

Morocco has poured money into the area — building luxury hotels, roads, airports and fish-canning factories, upgrading phosphate mines and offering settlers to "the southern provinces," tax breaks and free housing.

"There are now five times as many Moroccans in the Western Sahara as there are native Saharans," Mahfoud Ali Beiba, prime minister of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) declared by Polisario in 1976, told Reuters earlier this month.

Ali Beiba said Polisario wanted the withdrawal of settlers, administration and troops, but would accept the principle of equal forces — allowing as many Moroccan troops to remain as there are Polisario fighters.

A U.N. technical mission in November 1987 said Morocco had 82,000 men in the area. Independent estimates of Polisario strength vary widely from 3,000 to 15,000.

Moroccan diplomatic sources say a pullout of military or other personnel in unthinkable, but have indicated King Hassan might be willing to freeze administration, confine the army to barracks, and allow interim U.N. rule.

After holding direct talks with Polisario in January 1989 the king has refused guerrilla demands for a second meeting.

Instead, Morocco has given major publicity to a series of Polisario defections — including one of its founders, Omar Hadrami — But the guerrillas stubbornly refuse to go away and still launch the occasional hit and run raids.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS BRIEFS

Turkey recognises Namibian state

ANKARA (R) — Turkey Wednesday recognised the new state of Namibia, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. "Turkey is pleased to recognise the Namibian state and has decided to establish diplomatic relations," spokesman Murat Songar said. He said Turkey, one of the sponsors of the 1960 U.N. resolution against colonialism, had always supported the peoples of Africa in their struggle for independence.

Soviets make new Afghan proposals

HELSINKI (AP) — The Soviet Union brought new proposals to U.S.-Soviet talks on Afghanistan opening Wednesday, the chief Soviet negotiator said. The United States has been seeking to dislodge the Soviet-backed government in Kabul in a series of discussions on regional issues. "After our last meeting with the Americans, we have a package of new proposals which we have not yet discussed with them," said Yuri Alekseyev, head of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Mideast Department, on national Finnish radio. Alekseyev did not elaborate on the proposals, but the radio quoted Western diplomatic sources in Pakistan as saying that a breakthrough was expected in the Helsinki negotiations. The two sides previously met last August in Stockholm. Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly headed the U.S. delegation. The venue of the talks was kept secret.

Rajavi vows to overthrow Iranian regime

BAGHDAD (R) — Iran's main opposition group said Wednesday that the "medieval mullahs" who rule the country were deeply unpopular and it vowed to overthrow them within a year. "The National Liberation Army (NLA) will undoubtedly arise at the appropriate moment and put an end to the shameful rule of the medieval mullahs," said Massoud Rajavi, leader of the Iraq-based Mujahideen Khalq, in a speech marking the start of the Iranian new year. The NLA, the armed forces of the Mujahideen, launched several raids into Iran during its eight-year war with Iraq that halted with a ceasefire in August 1988. "The Iranian people view the (ruling) gangs of mullahs as totally illegitimate because of their numerous crimes, mass killings, warmongering and terrorism," said Rajavi in his speech at an NLA camp, telecast in English to Reuters in Baghdad. Many of Iran's senior leaders are clerics, including Ali Khamenei, spiritual successor to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini who led Iran from its 1979 Islamic revolution until his death last June. Rajavi, saying the Iranian government would fall within a year, urged the United Nations to expel it and called for an international oil and arms embargo against Iran.

4 killed in clashes in Turkey

ANKARA (R) — Four people were killed and nine were wounded in clashes between security forces and Kurdish demonstrators in a southeast Turkey town near the Syrian border, state-run radio said Wednesday. It said the town of Cizre, 10 kilometres from Syria in a region where Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) guerrillas are active, was under curfew after Tuesday's violence. Interior Minister Abdulkadir Aksu said Tuesday night that demonstrators fired long-range rifles at police commandos trying to break up the illegal rally. "Four of our citizens have been killed and nine were wounded," the radio quoted Aksu as saying. He did not identify the dead. The radio said 68 people were detained and that Aksu was to visit Cizre, which was now quiet. Wednesday.

Cairo residents forced to use sedatives

CAIRO (R) — More than half of Cairo's 12 million residents use sleeping pills and other sedatives to escape the city's deafening noise, the semi-official Al Ahram newspaper said Wednesday. The incessant blare of car horns and loudspeakers at mosques has forced 62 per cent of the population to use pills to get to sleep, the paper quoted an official survey as saying. The noise has inflicted high blood pressure on a further 33 per cent of the residents, it said. Motorists use car horns instead of traffic lights in streets choked with traffic and plagued by one of the world's most chaotic driving styles. Loudspeakers broadcast the five-times-a-day call to prayer, each mosque slightly out of time with the other. All that mingles with the sounds of Arabic and Western music from weddings and parties.

Sudanese rebels deny army report

ADDIS ABABA (R) — Sudanese rebels denied Wednesday that the army had killed 335 rebel soldiers in a fierce battle to recapture the town of Rumbek. A spokesman for the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in Addis Ababa said the army statement was a pure lie. Rumbek, 280 kilometres northeast of the southern regional capital Juba, had been in government hands since 1986, he said. SPLA forces withdrew from the town at the end of 1985 and claims of fierce fighting there were "pure fantasy," the spokesman said. The Sudanese army statement Tuesday said 19 army soldiers were killed in a battle for Rumbek Monday. It said the army killed 335 rebels and wounded hundreds.

2 Italians escape Somalia with plane

MANAMA, Bahrain (AP) — Two Italians from Somalia are being held for investigation after they flew a single-engine plane without advance notice into Bahrain, diplomatic sources reported Wednesday. The sources, who could not be named under standing rules, said the Italians had apparently stolen the plane which they flew from Somalia about a week ago. Suspicions hovered around some business frays with the Somali authorities, according to the sources.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77311-19

PROGRAMME ONE

15:30 Koran
15:40 Programme review
15:45 Children programme
17:10 Book of Adventure
18:00 News for the Deaf
18:20 Religious programme
18:50 Health programme
19:40 Programme review
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Local series
21:30 Programme review
21:40 Local programme
22:20 Arabic film
23:00 News in Arabic

PROGRAMME TWO

16:10 Tel Perce Filis
18:30 La Chance aux chameaux
19:50 News in French
19:15 Documentary
19:30 News in Hebrew
19:45 Varieties
20:50 News in Arabic
20:50 A Different World
21:10 NBA Basketball
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film: "A Time to Love and Time to Die"

PRAYER TIMES

04:16 Fajr
05:34 (Sunrise) Duha
11:43 Dhahar
15:10 Asr
17:23 Maghreb
19:59 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedisch

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terraviva Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623441

Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 717131

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 717131

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 827981, 683326

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811225

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817 and 654932

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Unstable weather conditions will prevail making it partly cloudy with possible thunder showers, especially in the eastern and southern parts of the country. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy with a chance for scattered showers and winds will be southerly fresh and seas rough.

Min/Max. temp. 6/15

Aqaba 15/25

Deserts 3/16

Jordan Valley 10/23

Yesterday's high temperatures: Am-

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

man 16, Aqaba 27. Humidity readings: Amman 20 per cent, Aqaba 10 per cent.

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN: Dr. Ahmad Al Haj 771020

Dr. Bassim Al Qudousi 640254

Dr. Abdul Rahim Ahmad 744685

Dr. Anwar Al Aqrabi 642696

Firas pharmacy 661912

Fedous pharmacy 770336

Al Aqaba pharmacy 637053

Nairook pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Al Naqouri (—)

Al Sharaa pharmacy (985238)

ZARQA:

Dr. Ghassan Al Faqih (—)

Khalaf pharmacy (984717)

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate 600341

Rescue 199

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire

ACC chambers of industry to discuss cooperation, integration

By Ziyad Al Shilleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan is taking part in a meeting of the federations of chambers of industry in the four-member Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) which will open in Sanaa, the North Yemeni capital, Thursday.

Issues related to industrial and economic integration among the four-member states, Jordan, Iraq, North Yemen and Egypt, will be reviewed at the four-day meeting, which is expected to conclude an agreement for the establishment of an industrial holding company with \$10 million capital.

The delegates will discuss the projected company's statutes and draw up the final version of the agreement. The company will organise the financing of various joint industrial schemes within the ACC group.

"The delegates will review the 12 agreements signed by the ACC heads of state in Sanaa and the 11 accords signed by the ACC leaders at the Amman summit, with

special focus on economic cooperation," according to Khaldoun Abu Hassan, chairman of the board of directors of the Amman Chamber of Industry, who will head the Jordanian delegation to the meetings in Sanaa.

The four delegations, he said, will set up a technical committee which will be entrusted with studying joint investment projects in industrial fields.

Abu Hassan said that cooperation with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the question of holding a regional symposium on cooperation with the United Nations Industrial Organisation (UNIDO) will be among the topics on the agenda.

He said that a report on the ACC's activities during the past year, and plans for 1990 and 1991 will be reviewed at the meeting.

According to Abu Hassan, the delegations will also discuss coordination within the ACC states in land, air and sea transport which can help promote ACC integration.



KARAMEH BATTLE MARKED: Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Fathi Abu Taleb attended Wednesday a celebration held by the Armed Forces to mark the 22nd anniversary of the Battle of Karameh. The celebration was held at the Karameh Martyrs Monument. The celebration was

attended by senior Armed Forces officers. Another celebration was held at the Hashemite Brigade to mark the brigade's 39th anniversary. Abu Taleb also attended the ceremony and toured a military exhibition (Petra)

Cropping pattern not feasible in Jordan Valley, says AMO

AMMAN (J.T.) — A study prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Organisation (AMO) has shown the "futility" of applying an agricultural cropping pattern system in Jordan and said the system, which has been applied for the past few years, has done great harm to production.

The study, prepared in cooperation with the United States Agency for International De-

velopment (USAID), showed that the application of the cropping pattern in the Jordan Valley region resulted in an annual decline by JD 35 million in the overall income of Jordanian vegetable and cereal producers.

"If farmers been allowed to grow crops their way, their income would have been increased by 75 per cent," the study said. The question of cropping patterns was one of several issues

discussed at a two-day symposium held earlier this month in Amman during which the subject of working out a national agricultural marketing strategy was discussed.

The study has called for the amendment of the AMO law issued in 1986 in order to give the organisation wider authority and responsibilities in the field of marketing the country's agricultural produce.



A rescue operation exercise mounted by civil defence personnel under way at a new school opened Wednesday at Sahab (Petra photo)

Civil Defence Department opens training school in Sahab

AMMAN (Petra) — The Civil Defence Department (CDD) Wednesday opened special training school which will graduate officers to carry out civil defence duties.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Salem Masa'deh opened the school at the Sahab Industrial City, south-east of Amman, and later inspected display of equipment used in civil defence operations.

"The school will train students in rescue, first aid, public safety precautions and driving heavy machinery among other duties needed by the CDD," according to Major-General Afir Al Ghoul, the CDD director, in an address

at the official ceremony. "Training is the best means of ensuring the safety of citizens and safeguarding their property," said Ghoul.

"Before the school was established, training used to be conducted in different CDD centres around the country under the supervision of the CDD headquarters in Amman," added Ghoul. He said that once the school becomes operational, it will graduate qualified officers for civil defence operations, leaving the CDD headquarters with the task of planning and preparing the courses and deciding on means of promoting CDD work

in general. Ghoul thanked several Jordanian organisations for their financial assistance. He also thanked the director of the Sahab Industrial City for providing an appropriate piece of land for setting up a training field for the CDD officers adjoining the new school.

After inspecting display of different equipment, the minister watched a rescue operation in which CDD officers evacuated people caught in a fire in one of the residential blocs.

Masa'deh also watched a fire-fighting operation on a vehicle that was ablaze following a road accident.

Accounting conference concludes

AMMAN (J.T.) — The second Arab International Accounting Conference ended Wednesday.

Delegates to the conference, organised by the Arab Thought Forum and the Arab Society of Certified Accountants (ASCA), discussed the question of providing proper qualification through training to auditors and accountants, who can play a leading role in economic development, according to Tala' Abu Ghazaleh, the conference chairman.

Abu Ghazaleh said that the delegates emphasised the question of linking matters related to financing and implementing development schemes related to financial and cost accountability.

"Internationally accepted principles in accountancy were among the topics discussed. The delegates stressed their importance in promoting trade and investments," Abu Ghazaleh added.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, announced Tuesday at the opening session Jordan will recognise certificates awarded by ASCA which organises training and examinations for accountants from the Arab World.

Attending the session were delegates from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and North Yemen.

Two new CSCC branches to serve north and south

AMMAN (Petra) — The Civil Service Consumer Corporation (CSCC) Wednesday opened two of its branches in the northern town of Deir Abi Saeed and in the southern town of Qasr, near Karak. CSCC Director-General Mohammad Al Naser said that altogether 12 branches will be opened before the end of 1990 to offer services to the largest number of government employees and their families.

Referring to a recent government decision to raise the value of products to be marketed at the CSCC markets in the Kingdom from JD 4.5 million to JD 6.5 million, Naser said the decision will boost the corporation's activities, which benefit limited income groups.

During March, two other CSCC branches will be opened, one at Bani Kinaneh in the desert region and the other at Mazar in the south. "Plans are being made to open a branch at Abu Nusair housing estate in the coming month," Naser added.

Naser said that in the coming week CSCC branches will be supplied with basic commodities for the month of Ramadan, but frozen chicken would not be sent to remote branches since the corporation lacks sufficient refrigerator vehicles to transport the commodity.

Only one third of a 60 million Swiss francs loan offered to the Kingdom was used here in development schemes.

The ambassador and the minister discussed cooperation in halting desertification and disposing of waste.

The ambassador said that Jordan can benefit from Switzerland's experiments in this regard.

government to use in various projects designed to protect the environment.

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The ambassador said that Jordan can benefit from Switzerland's experiments in this regard.

EC, resources authority sign project agreement

AMMAN (J.T.) — The European Community (EC) and the Natural Resources Authority (NRA) have signed a project agreement, under which the EC will provide a grant of ECU 1 million (JD 0.8 million) for the authority's economic geology project.

The grant agreement was signed at the Ministry of Planning Wednesday by EC Head of Delegation in Amman Christian Falkowski, and Minister of Planning Awad Al Masri.

The project, with the help of European institutions, will probe the best means to exploit the economic potential of Jordan's non-oil mineral resources, such as ornamental stones and copper.

Jordan's exploited mineral resources are limited to phosphates, potash and quarrying, which account for 10.5% of GDP and 36% of exports. The economic geology project aims at pinpointing other mineral deposits and determining their value and potential, both for locally used raw materials and for exports.

The NRA has conducted geological studies that indicate the presence of a wide range of mineral deposits with a commercial value that have yet to be assessed in technical and economic terms.

The agreement signed by the EC and the NRA will provide for further studies to build upon the existing data in three phases:

1. Quarry management and marketing of ornamental stones. The 10-month study will focus on marble, granite and travertines, and will provide European experts in marketing and quarry management.

2. Copper prospects of Wadi Araba. This 11-month study will investigate the feasibility of, and techniques for copper mining in Wadi Araba, and will provide experts in mining and minerals economy.

3. Geochemical prospecting of Aqaba/Araba complex. The 23-month study will target sulphide metals, rare earths and precious metals in the geochemical prospecting of the Aqaba/Araba

complex, in south east Jordan. It will provide experts in prospecting, economic geology, geochemistry and minerals economy.

The European Community funded project will provide a technical assistance team and visiting experts to help transfer know-how and initiate the development of mineral deposits. It will also supply vehicles and field equipment, data processors, specialised literature and documentation, and specific testing equipment.

In addition, NRA staff will benefit from specialised seminars and training in Jordan and Europe and post-graduate education to study appropriate minerals economics and related subjects.

It is expected that the project will result in an increase in Jordan's mining output, a greater raw material self-sufficiency, and stimulation of industrial activity at all levels, including village-based artisans.

Consultancy tenders are currently under evaluation by the NRA and a contract is expected to be signed in the coming weeks.

Yarmouk holds seminar on Soviet Jews

IRBID (Petra) — Three Jordanians participated Wednesday in a seminar on the Soviet Jewish immigration into occupied Palestinian land. The seminar was held as part of the activities of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences' second cultural week at Yarmouk University.

Director of the Foreign Ministry's Department of Palestinian Affairs Dr. Ahmad Qatanani said the Zionist ideology is based on three principles: Jewish immigration to Palestine, occupying lands, and evicting Palestinians from their lands.

Qatanani said that the reverse Jewish immigration from the occupied territories to Western countries caused anxiety in Israel which is now encouraging the immigration of Jews from Africa and Eastern Europe.

Political scientist Dr. Labib

Qamhawi criticised the Arab World's response to the Jewish immigration to Palestine. He said the "Arab response was not as serious as it should be." He said that the immigration means war on the Arab Nation. Qamhawi said that in order to confront the dangers of the Jewish migration, the Arabs should define their aims and priorities, support the Palestinian uprising, bolster democracy in the Arab World and instill the concept of Arab national security.

Dr. Abdul Razzaq Bani Hani of the university's economics department affirmed that the existence of the Zionist entry depends on the flow of immigrants to the occupied territories and the Western financial support.

Bani Hani reviewed the economic impact of the immigration on Palestinians and Israelis.

Ministers tour Madaba, listen to grievances

AMMAN (Petra) — Ministers of agriculture, culture, labour, and tourism Wednesday toured the Bani Hamideh, Dhiban, Wadi Al Waleh Almuji and Alhidan areas south of Amman in the Madaba district to study the economic situation.

The ministers met with local residents who raised the problems of services mainly related to agriculture, roads, livestock and artesian wells. Residents urged the government to help reduce the problem of unemployment by

launching income-generating projects like resthouses near archaeological sites.

Minister of Tourism Abdul Karim Al Kabarti said that the visit was made upon directives from Prime Minister Mudar Badran. Badran will make an inspection tour of the Madaba district in the next few days to hear more about requests for services.

Labour Minister Qassem Obeidat said his department was taking measures to help drought stricken regions.

Ministry issues book on environment condition

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment has issued a book on the environment in the Kingdom prepared by a team of specialists in environmental affairs.

The book, which is considered as a reference for all those concerned with protecting the environment, reviews the water situation in the country, surface and underground resources, investments in water areas, water

reserves, prospects for the future, irrigation in the Jordan Valley and the high regions and deserts, sewerage projects, the treatment of waste water, drilling of artesian wells and regulations and laws pertaining to the protection of water resources.

The book, of 308 pages, reviews the main elements which cause air, water and land pollution and gives special classifications to soil and the use of land in Jordan for agriculture, pastures and others.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

THE NATIONAL WEEK FOR SUPPORTING THE INTIFADA

- Exhibitions of Palestinian heritage and photos of the Intifada at Al Razi hall, the Professional Associations Complex.
- Show of Palestinian national songs at the Professional Associations Complex — 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- Exhibition of plastic artists Arji Al Hamad and Ibrahim Al Nabahneh at the Housing Bank Complex.
- Art exhibition by seven Iraqi artists at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation (10 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.)
- Art exhibition entitled "Spanish contemporary engravings" at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- Art exhibition by Ahmad Nawash at the French Cultural Centre.
- The spring exhibition of Bani Hamida women's weaving project at the Bani Hamida House - Jabal Amman, Rainbow Street.

FILMS

- Soviet film entitled "The Officers" at the Soviet Cultural Centre — 5:30 p.m.
- Feature film entitled "It's a Wonderful Life" at the American Centre — 7:00 p.m.

THEATRE

- Arabic puppet play entitled "Fables from my Grandmother's Chest" at the Royal Cultural Centre — 4:00 and 6:00 p.m.

ANNOUNCING



Friday, March 23 to Thursday, March 29, 1990
8 a.m. - 6 p.m.

at the Bani Hamida House

Jabal Amman, Rainbow Street
Tel: 658696/7

Save the Children Project

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975
مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:
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Jordan Press Foundation.

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Telex: 21497 ALRA1 JO

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.

Subscription and advertising rates are available from the

Jordan Times advertising department.

Example of Namibia

THE U.N. brokered birth of independent Namibia brings to an end the era of formal colonialism in Africa and the beginning of a new chapter of hope, freedom and self-determination across not only Africa but also the rest of the world. Seen in the vein, the victory of the people of Namibia is a victory for all mankind and deserves to be celebrated by all nations. To underscore the universality of the Namibian triumph, many world leaders and statesmen have taken part in the independence celebrations in Windhoek, the capital of free and independent Namibia. Yet before the sun has set on Africa's last colony much blood had been spilled. Suffice to recall the 23-year-old guerrilla struggle stubbornly waged by South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) against Pretoria. This hard-won independence took a heavy toll on the lives and property of the Namibian people who maintained their war of independence against great and formidable odds. The perseverance of the Namibian people and the nations of the world that stood by them is an example to emulate and a precedent for other peoples of the world that are still denied their inalienable right to self-determination and statehood. As is well known, the road to freedom and self-determination does not end with the formal declaration of independence and statehood. Unfortunately, we live in a world that is full of situations where external colonialism has at times been replaced by internal oppression and the frustration of the continuing process of development. The only time countries old or new earn their real independence is when they continue to uphold the basic tenets of the right to self-determination by exercising parliamentary democracy and pluralism. Namibia, like many young countries of the world, has a long way before it can consolidate its newly-won freedom and independence. There are many hard core economic and domestic political problems that await peaceful and democratic resolution. One can be sure that having invested so much and for so long to earn their independence and freedom from external colonialism, the Namibian people would not hesitate to invest heavily in preservation of their freedom. Fortunately for Namibia it can draw heavily on the experiences of other nations in the developing world which had fallen prey to domestic tyranny and oppression in the wake of the formal end of alien rule and domination. Namibia can and will be a shining example of how a young country that has won its freedom and independence was able to sustain them with equal vigour and passion.

JORDAN PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i daily on Wednesday urged the international community to end Israel's occupation of Arab territories and end Zionism's presence in the Arab land. The paper recalled that the United Nations which represents the international community had earlier declared Zionism to be a form of racism which is being opposed by all nations of the world. It said that the Palestinian people, through their continued uprising, are now involved in ending one form of racism represented in Zionism's presence on Arab territory. The paper said that the Palestinians are not only struggling for freedom but also trying to rid the world of racism and racist policies. The paper said that by ending Israeli occupation of Arab land in Palestine, the international community will be helping to achieve peace in the Middle East which is badly needed for the people of this region. March 21, marks the anniversary of the United Nations declaration of the fight against racism and all forms of injustice, the paper noted. It said that such anniversary should prompt nations of the world to rid the globe of the last remnants of racism.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily criticises Britain for its behaviour of the execution of a British-Israeli spy in Baghdad. Tareq Massarweh says that the Arabs and not Britain should show anger and disgust, because Britain has tried to endanger Arab security by planting spies in our midst. The writers says Britain has launched aggression and exposed its hostility towards the Arab not only through the spy affair but also through its aid to world Zionism under the British mandate in Palestine and through lack of any British condemnation of Israel's continued barbarism and killings of innocent children in Palestine. The writer notes that Britain was proved irresponsible and irrational in its behaviour by its friends and allies in the European Community which have refused to join in imposing sanctions on Iraq, as London had demanded in retaliation against the execution of the spy. He says that Iraq executed Bazzoff not because he was a journalist but because he was a spy, sent by Britain and Israel to steal secrets and endanger Iraq's security. He says that the storm raised by Britain over the affair has clearly backfired and could not serve imperialist interests.

Sawt Al Shaab daily said that the Arabs can negotiate peace with Israel only when they are strong enough to counter its force and when they are united and determined to carry out collective action. The paper said that all Israel wants is to impose a peace of its own making and one that can serve its own purpose. The on going development of a multi-head rockets capable of carrying nuclear bombs in cooperation with South Africa, points only to one thing: that Israel wants to impose its terms on the Arabs, said the paper. It is regrettable, said the paper, that some Arabs are deceived by a number of statements by Israeli leaders and are under the false impression that Israel and world Zionism want to have peace with the Arab Nation. As long as the Israeli are amassing weapons of all kinds and refusing to recognise the rights of the Palestinians, said the paper, the Arab Nation can never dream of having a lasting and just peace with the Jewish state.

Medical care as a political weapon in Gaza

By Martin Rubenberg

MEDICAL care has been viewed through the ages as a humane and beneficial enterprise, but in reality, to a greater or lesser degree, it has been an instrument of political control. The ability to provide medical care and the power to withhold it has evolved into a strategic and tactical weapon of political and "low intensity" warfare, and nowhere in the world is this better illustrated than in the Gaza Strip in the context of the intifada.

The Gaza Strip is an area of approximately 350 sq. km., bordered on the north by the Erez checkpoint (Israel), on the south by the Rafah checkpoint (Egypt), on the west by the Mediterranean and on the east by the Negev Desert (Israel). Residing in this area are approximately 700,000 Palestinians, 2,000 Israeli settlers and an undetermined number of Israeli troops (estimated to vary between 7,000 and 25,000 at any particular time). Approximately 50 per cent of the land area has been confiscated by Israel for settlements, "nature reserves", "conservation areas" and "military" requirements. The Palestinian population density in the remaining area is thus 4,000 people per square kilometre, one of the highest in the world, and by comparison, 20 times greater than that of Israel.

Water allocation and usage are controlled by the Israeli authorities. Seventy five per cent of the total water resources go to 2,000 Israeli settlers and only 25 per cent to the 700,000 Palestinian Gazans. Less than a quarter of the Palestinian population has

running water in their homes.

There is no sewage system in any of the eight refugee camps (Jabaliya, Beach Camp, Nuseirat, Bureij, Deir Al Balah, Khan Yunis, Mughazi and Rafah), home to over 250,000 people. Raw sewage runs through the streets and alleys of the camps. In Gaza city, storm drainage is inadequate with the result that after heavy rain many streets are impassable for several days due to sewage backup and the creation of fetid pools. Solid waste collection and disposal, a municipal function, is inadequate due to funding controls by the occupation authority, erratic at best and further complicated by curfews.

Deadly combination

The combination of high population density, limited water availability, open sewers and inadequate garbage disposal render the population highly subject to viral, bacterial and parasitic contagion, with resultant high levels of respiratory and intestinal diseases and generalised debility.

Although no exact figures are tabulated for the Gaza Strip population, the best estimates reveal that between 30 to 50 infant deaths occur during the first year of life per 1,000 live births. This rate is obscenely high when compared to an infant mortality rate of 10.7 in Israel (by official 1987 statistics).

The figures that I have been able to obtain indicate that approximately 80 per cent of the population had some form of medical insurance prior to the

onset of the intifada. During the past two years the cost of medical insurance has doubled and this, combined with the increasing economic deprivation of the community, has markedly decreased the ability of Gazans to afford it. Now less than 40 per cent have any medical coverage.

The birth rate in Gaza is one of the world's highest. The best estimates are in the range of 50 live births per 1,000 people per year. Two factors will probably drive this figure higher: 60 per cent of the population is under 20 and thus approaching marriage and child-bearing, and they have lived for two years under a constant 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. curfew.

Deprived of facilities

There are approximately 500 physicians in the Gaza Strip the majority of whom are employed by government hospitals at a wage of \$500 per month. The physician to population ratio in Gaza is one to 1,400, compared with a physician to population ratio in Israel of one to 400.

In addition to the low number of physicians, there are no specialists or special facilities for thoracic surgery, microsurgery, cardiovascular surgery, neurosurgery, radiation therapy, or pathology. There is no CAT scanner and the few X-ray units are in chronic disrepair and remain so as technicians from Tel Aviv refuse to travel to Gaza despite the fact that the X-ray units are under contract warranty. There was no radiology specialist until very recently when a volunteer sent by the Italian government arrived, as did an anaesthesiologist. Shifa

hospital, the largest government hospital, has a 16-20 bed psychiatric ward, but there is no trained psychiatrist to run even this small facility.

Hospitals and their facilities are grossly inadequate to service the population. At present there are only 650 general hospital beds available in all of Gaza, less than one per 1,000. Sanitary conditions in the government hospitals are deplorable. In the past, the Israeli government allocated Gazans approximately 90 beds in Israeli hospitals for the treatment of residents with medical or surgical conditions for which no facilities existed in Gaza. During the past year, this allocation has been reduced to 26.

The vast number of injuries (in the tens of thousands) inflicted during the intifada by the Israeli military totally overwhelmed the already inadequate medical facilities. Injuries such as gunshot wounds, gas inhalation and beatings have to be treated on an outpatient basis.

Deliberate obstruction

The Israeli government and its occupation forces have been methodical in devising ways of inhibiting the growth, development, utilisation and delivery of medical and health care services. Monies necessary for the construction and maintenance of medical facilities are increasingly rationed by the occupying authority. A new building which is to replace the totally inadequate facilities at Shifa Hospital has not been under construction for eight years. The civil administration has stated that this building "will be completed within six

months". During the time I was in Gaza I saw no construction work in progress.

Bureaucratic obstruction is used to limit medical care. It is illegal to do voluntary work in the Gaza Strip without government approval: an unpaid volunteer must apply for "working papers". He will be asked to produce diplomas, certificates of competence, etc. It takes approximately nine months to process a work permit which is only good for six months. This inhibits volunteer and philanthropic work. Medical care is also limited by the Israeli authorities when they prevent the return of Palestinian physicians who have been trained abroad. A U.S. trained haematologist was told by the Israeli authorities that he could legally enter, but that neither his wife, who was also Palestinian, nor his two-year-old child, could join him in the West Bank. As a result this very competent physician is practicing in Amman.

Radio facilities, including physicians' beepers, have been banned, making immediate notification of accidents or illness to a hospital or ambulance impossible. The only haematologist in Gaza, who lives in Khan Yunis, has no phone and no beeper; he cannot be contacted at home if he is needed.

The absence of adequate services, continuous nightly curfews, frequent 24-hour curfews for days or weeks at a time, military closures and regulations prohibiting Gazans from remaining in Israel overnight, all combine to increase the pain, suffering, debilitation and mortality of Palestinian patients.

The cost in the future

A related aspect involves the future cost that Palestinian society will have to bear as a result of the intifada and Israel's brutal response, which is all-encompassing and methodical to the point where it raises the question whether this response is an attempt to suppress the intifada or the beginning of Israel's "final solution" to the "Palestinian problem."

When one considers the vast numbers of individuals between the ages of 10 and 30 suffering paralytic injuries, blindness, amputations and deformities, one realises that the cost of their rehabilitation and maintenance is going to be a tremendous economic and psychological burden on whatever society evolves from the present situation. Certainly, at the present time, Palestinian society cannot provide rehabilitation for so large a number of injured people. It may well be that in the long run the burden may have to be shared by a variety of organisations — both charitable and political — or perhaps something akin to a Palestinian Marshall Plan. Under current constraints of the occupation, it is impossible to plan for future needs.

We are forced to the conclusion that the Israeli occupation seems bent on a form of collective punishment to the entire Palestinian populace. Thus, in the most dramatic way, the Israeli authorities are demonstrating how medical care, its production, its delivery and its utilisation can be used as a political weapon to control and subjugate a population — Middle East International, London.

How East German journalism turned around

By Fred David

IT IS as if the Pope had stood up and announced: "God? There is no God. There never has been. It has all been a bluff."

Hans Eggert, of the East Berlin Berliner Zeitung newspaper, finds it hard to smile at this joke. The malicious satire is for him reality.

Last year he was suspended from his job because he refused to splash a picture of a third-rank official guest of party boss Erich Honecker across six columns and relegate a story about the Armenian earthquake to two columns further down the page.

The battle about the front page layout went on from mid-day until early evening, just before the paper went to press. Then the verdict came from on high via one of those grey telephones, which always occupied a place on Eggert's desk.

The message came from Joachim Herrmann of the East Berlin communist party (SED) Central Committee, the head of the propaganda and education department, responsible for good public relations for head of state Erich Honecker.

The terse proposal, which was in fact an order, said: "We urgently recommend that you remain with the six-column layout."

The whole system was based on the pyramid: at the top a few who were informed about what was going on, then the semi-informed, then those who were hardly informed at all and finally those who were very badly informed. Eggert does not say to which group he belonged, but it can be guessed.

Months later, at the end of January, the stubborn editor saw the all-powerful Erich Honecker again on East German television, the man who just a little while before had been so concerned, via his intimate aide Herrmann, about the layout of the Berliner Zeitung.

This Erich Honecker was now just a pitiful, doddering old man with the same lifeless eyes, who was hustled into a state police car by an official in a black raincoat.

There is no "God." There never has been. To his own astonishment this realisation hit Eggert like a blow with a club.

Last November, Eggert was reinstated as editor of the Berliner Zeitung, elected by 93 of the 116 members of the paper's staff, including secretaries and messengers.

The old editor, for 20 years slavishly obedient to the Central Committee, has been demoted to dealing with readers' letters.

The whole system was based on the pyramid: at the top a few who were informed about what was

going on, then the semi-informed, then those who were hardly informed at all and finally those who were very badly informed. Eggert does not say to which group he belonged, but it can be guessed.

His ex-boss's office was sealed up every evening, including the filing cabinets, irrespective whether important documents were being safeguarded or not. What was decisive was the impression that they contained secret information. Power was in the hands of people who had information, or professed they had it.

A Berliner Zeitung foreign correspondent reported that until last October all his coverage from non-communist countries was kept in a kind of poison cabinet. People who toed the party line could only peruse foreign newspapers with the personal approval of the head of department. Apart from senior personnel, it was rare for there to be any changes in the editorial staff.

Sometimes the editor-in-chief let slip a comment of the sort that could be made in the old days. After the initial exposure euphoria in journalism in the GDR has "adopted a proper arrangement."

People still support the "working group disclosures," but "our young Trotskyites have also become quieter. Our readers cannot handle more than four critical articles per day."

Eggert has not the slightest idea what will happen to his paper after the East German elections on 18 March. He does not know if he will remain editor-in-chief, what the company's name will be and who will own it.

Eggert's newspaper was the property of the SED — perhaps it is not so any longer? The position changes a hundred times a day. Does the Berliner Zeitung have debts amounting to 20 million marks? Eggert says that is unrealistic, but he does not have a clear overview of the profit and loss account.

Until recently Zentrags was the owners of the paper, a complex SED organisation, set up as a holding company, which controlled most of East Germany's press and printing facilities, as well as distribution operations and advertising.

Berliner Zeitung, which is primarily a paper serving the capital, recently opened up its columns to advertising from the West. A full-page ad costs DM 17,000.

Until recently foreign currency earnings have been swallowed up by Zentrags: Berliner Zeitung was paid the equivalent in East Marks, next to nothing in fact.

Now everyone is talking about market mechanisms, but no-one knows precisely how they work. Eggert said: "The truth is we don't have any contingency plans in the cupboard. We muddle through from day to day."

He believes that Berlin needs a major left-wing newspaper. He gave himself encouragement, saying: "We must tackle things with greater self-confidence."

As a precaution he has taken down the portrait of Lenin that used to hang in his office. The framed picture of the revolution is on a pile of newspapers in a corner of the boss's office, readily available if needed.

Gerd Hölzel, head of the Berliner Verlag, situated in a multi-story building in the city centre, is waiting to have his office redecorated. Ernst Thälmann, the Communist Party chief of the 1930s, looked over his shoulder from the wall.

Hölzel was given the job of operating the former SED disinformation apparatus a year ago; it is estimated it had a budget of 150 million East Marks annually.

Despite all changes Hölzel's empire is still considerable. It includes the Berliner Zeitung with a circulation of 445,000, and ten other newspapers with circulations which excite the envy of Western partners.

The Neue Berliner Illustrierte has a circulation of 800,000. The moderate, popular paper BZ am Abend has a circulation of 204,000, and the conservative family magazine Wochenpost prints 1.2 million copies per

week.

The satirical publication Eulenspiegel has a circulation of 500,000, a radio and TV programme magazine 1.5 million copies, the arts publication Magazin 565,000 copies, the women's magazine Frau 935,000 copies, and the leisure publication Freie Welt 360,000 copies.

The smallest publication, but with a tradition stretching way into the past, is the political magazine Weltbühne with a circulation of 31,000 copies. Just for appearance it seems to be published by the Verlag Carl von Ossietzky & Co. publishing house.

Undaunted, technocrat Gerd Hölzel said: "I shall not cut myself off from the SED." But this statement does not mean much in view of the situation in the GDR at present. Just a few days after he had said this the party changed its abbreviation to PDS — Party of Democratic Socialism.

But whether the party is called SED or PDS the days of the East German media giant Berliner Verlag are numbered. It should be broken up. But how?

Suddenly Hölzel was in a hurry

and disappeared. His deputy, Lothar Popp, equally a long-serving party man, believes that a joint venture with the Hamburg-based Gruner Jahr publishing organisation has a strong possibility of coming about, but only in the first instance in the harmless radio and TV programme magazines.

Popp said: "We will not surrender more than 49 per cent," but this sounded more the expression of a hope than a demand.

According to Popp West German publishing houses are battering down the comrades deputy-directors' office doors. He pulled a wry face and said they were coming with audacious offers such as "25 per cent for you when the contract is concluded."

Others want to push their own political lines, such as Axel Springer Verlag, which has plenty of clout, and already has great plans for newspapers in Greater Berlin.

But Hölzel said that Springer was out of the running as far as Berliner Verlag was concerned. Berliner Verlag is also giving consideration to Greater Berlin. Using the terminology of Western publishing house managers

people are saying in the Berliner Zeitung that they cannot be easily pushed out of the market. One staff member said: "We are deeply rooted among the people of the eastern part of the city."

A trial run in West Berlin produced encouraging results. Hans Eggert said: "The interest was enormous. We could increase our circulation immensely overnight if only we could get hold of enough newsprint."

It is true that at newspaper kiosks in East Berlin dailies are quickly bought up. The interest is reflected in the readers' letters. The Berliner Zeitung received 11,407 in the period between October and December last year.

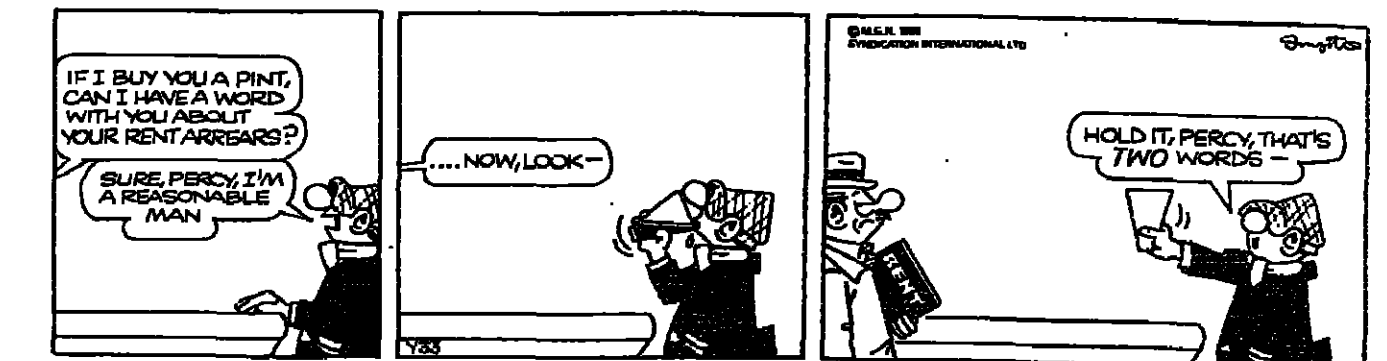
Jürgen Nowak, editor-in-chief of Eulenspiegel, complains of facilities working to full capacity. He said: "We could increase our sale price of 40 pfennigs threefold overnight if we were allowed to do so. Readers would still take the magazine. We have a waiting list of subscribers."

Perhaps the publication will get a new name for the subscribers' waiting list — Erich Honecker — Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, Hamburg.

Mutt'n' Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



No modern 'Arabian Nights' tellers

By Stephen Hughes
Reuter

FEZ, Morocco — Arab women authors might be called the Scheherazades of the modern world but they find it tougher than the "Arabian Nights" character to tell their stories in a society still dominated by men.

"Anyway, Scheherazade's tales were probably written by men," said Khadija Tama, who organised the first conference of Arab women authors in Fez earlier this month.

Wassyla Tamzali of Algeria, a United Nations educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) specialist on sex discrimination issues, said Arab women had to battle all the way in a society where "inequality is legalised by Islamic laws."

"Not only are they up against traditions of oppression and inequality, but they are also faced by the excesses of (Islamic) fundamentalist movements and intolerance," she told the opening session.

In an interview with Reuters, Tamzali said male prejudice against women was rampant even in the West. The only areas of equality were the media and advertising "because women are great communicators."

She said women authors had an important role to play in combating prejudice and censorship but faced an uphill struggle.

Only three Arab states, she said, had ratified a U.N. convention signed in 1980 to end discrimination against women, "the others say the convention is not universal and they have their own definitions of equality."

Tunisia ratified the convention, Aïda Saïda, UNESCO women's programme coordinator and the only Tunisian present, said former President Habib Bourguiba was practically the only Arab statesman to champion the secular state and women's emancipation.

"Whatever people say about him now, Bourguiba will always be remembered by women for this," she said.

The Fez conference brought together 30 women from 10 Arab states — novelists, short-story writers and poets. "We are all feminists but it must be stressed we are not against men," said Tama.

A banner outside the conference hall read: "Beside each woman there is a man." And to prove they were not an exclusive group, the organisers invited a dozen men, mostly critics or professors of literature.

The men asked the most questions in the first debate on the agenda — about Aïsha Taymouriya, a pioneer Arab woman novelist who wrote in Cairo a century ago.

Syrian Ulfat Idliby, doyenne of the writers present, has had books translated into 14 languages including Russian and Chinese. She ran a famous literary salon frequented by male and female authors in Damascus in the 1960s.

She told Reuters some of her stories had a political flavour, relating the tribulations of the poor during the revolution against France in Syria. "All women have something important to say about politics."

Somaya Naamane, the author of a Moroccan best-seller about female sexuality, said the biggest problem facing writers of both sexes in the Arab World was illiteracy.

"No Arab writer can possibly live by his or her pen. Not even Naguib Mahfouz, who had to keep his job as a civil servant although he was a best-seller before he won the Nobel prize," Mahfouz, an Egyptian, was the first Arab writer to win the Nobel Literature Prize, in 1988.

Alia Saïda said: "Illiteracy rates are very high in the Arab World and much higher among women traditions are mainly oral, telling tales like Scheherazade." Scheherazade is the character in the ancient "Arabian Nights" collection of stories who saved her life by entertaining a king with her storytelling.

Female literacy is as high as 94 per cent in rural areas of Morocco, according to the local daily newspaper Al Bayane.

Short-story writer Leila Abouzeid, who ran a popular Moroccan radio programme for years, said radio was still the best medium for women. "You can talk to them if they cannot read."

Naamane said the most Arab author could hope to sell in the region was about 30,000 copies. In Morocco it was between 1,000 and 2,000, but her French-language book on sexuality had sold a record 18,000 copies in the country.

UNRWA — shifting roles and meeting the real needs

UNRWA feature

IN the occupied Gaza Strip, as elsewhere, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) long ago shifted the emphasis of its relief programmes for Palestine refugees away from basic daily needs — food, shelter, clothing — in favour of long-range human-development activities such as education, training, social programmes for women and young people and self-support schemes designed to enable refugees to move from the welfare roles into useful and productive vocations and trades.

The Palestinian intifada which started in the Gaza Strip in late 1987, and the tightening grip imposed by the Israeli occupation forces in response to it, have changed all that somewhat.

To be sure, UNRWA's schools — 146 of them in Gaza for 91,000 pupils — have tried to keep operating throughout the turmoil of the intifada, and UNRWA's Gaza Training Centre, closed for over a year at the beginning of the uprising, recently re-opened and has even been expanded to offer two new courses in physiotherapy and business and office practices.

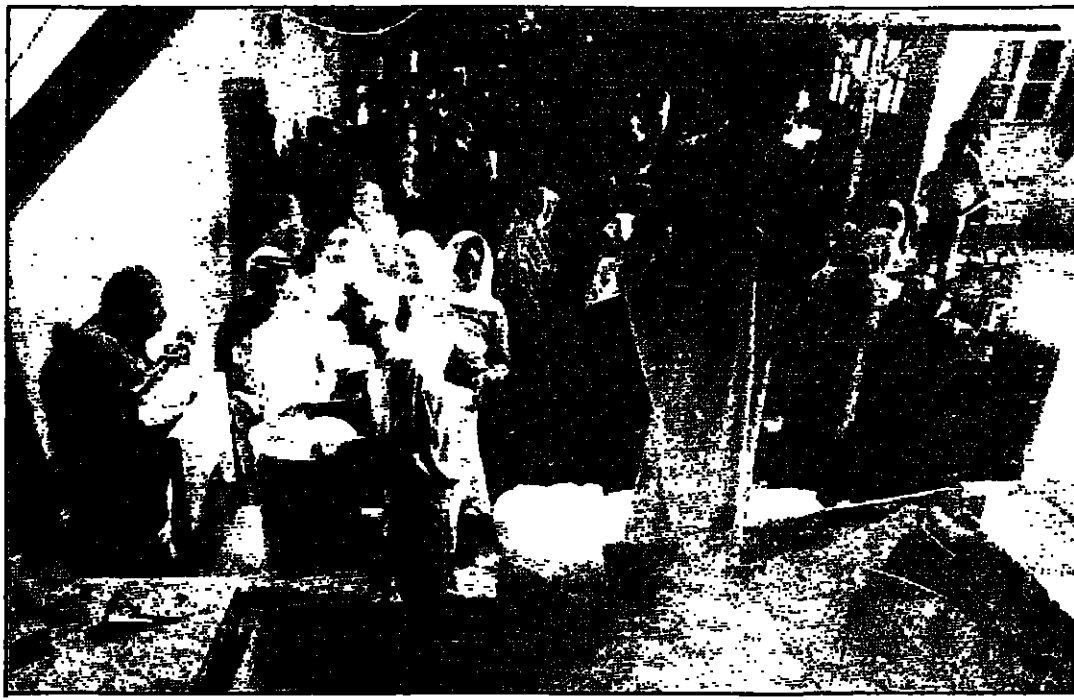
And UNRWA's health centres in the Gaza Strip — which in "normal" times receive well over a million patient visits a year for basic preventive and mother-and-child health care — have had to cope with thousands of casualties from military action against the intifada. Injuries from army gunfire, beatings, rubber bullets, plastic-coated metal rounds and tear gas totalled more than 34,000

in the Gaza Strip from the beginning of the uprising in December 1987 through the end of December 1989. UNRWA health centres are staying open round-the-clock to deal with the casualties, and UNICEF has helped UNRWA to set up physiotherapy clinics to rehabilitate the wounded.

The intifada has also given renewed importance to UNRWA's welfare programme, part of the Agency's range of relief and social services to refugees. Economic hardship — refugees cut off from their jobs by strikes, travel restrictions and frequent and often lengthy curfews on camps, towns and villages — has revived the general demand for food and other welfare assistance from UNRWA.

This has put great pressure on the UNRWA workers on the "front lines" in the refugee community: the social workers who must hear, review and help decide on pleas for assistance from a refugee population — their own friends and neighbours — who are under ever greater distress. It is a difficult job which dedicated UNRWA social workers like Ahmad Hassan Shara, pictured here going about his work on an "average" day recently, undertake willingly as part of their responsibility to their fellow refugees.

A graduate in sociology from Egypt's Helwan University, Ahmad Shara lives in Gaza's Beach Camp and has been employed by UNRWA since September 1985. He is married and comes from a large family of eight brothers and five sisters.



A UNRWA flour distribution centre and (below) a UNRWA worker collects information from a refugee family (UNRWA photos)



Cairo surgeon faces tough battle

By John Fullerton
Reuter

CAIRO — Dr. Mahmoud Sherif has given up the surgeon's scalpel for the formidable challenge of improving the health of Cairo's teeming millions.

"I miss operating, but trying to improve the health of greater Cairo's 12 million residents seems a natural progression from treating an individual patient," said the cancer specialist who became governor of Cairo nearly a year ago.

It is not a task for the faint-hearted.

While the city undoubtedly has its own very special charm, daily life for the poorer Cairene is often bedevilled by overcrowding, congested traffic, a yellow smog composed of dust and car exhaust as well as unremitting noise.

There have been major improvements over the past decade — the streets are cleaner, and traffic moves, albeit slowly, through a network of new arterial highways and the telephones do work. Waste water flooding is also less widespread.

But residents say air and noise pollution is getting worse.

Sherif recognises that much remains to be done, and he took on the job in April last year with an urbane optimism and a clear sense of priorities.

He heads a staff of some 23,000, divided into five city re-

gions and 17 districts with an annual budget of some 800 million Egyptian pounds (\$300 million).

"In my personal view it is not as much a matter of money as resource allocation and personnel management," he said.

His first priority is to put solid roofs over the heads of the poor, along with power and running water.

Some 6,000 low-income families — roughly 30,000 people — join the queue for new homes in Cairo each year.

Sherif's strategy is to build new housing complexes in which the homes are made available at actual cost, with repayments over 30 years at an interest of five per cent.

That means a low-income family will pay some 40 to 60 Egyptian pounds (\$15 to 22) a month to own a small flat.

Some of the new housing takes the form of satellite towns, deliberately designed to reduce inner city congestion by drawing people out of the city's Dickensian tenement areas.

By 1992, Sherif hopes to have completed 120,000 low-income flats in four major housing estates in greater Cairo and providing homes for more than 620,000 people.

His second priority has been to get raw sewage off the streets by nearly doubling the capacity of the existing city sewage network to handle 3.8 million cubic metres



A scene from a Cairo street

of effluent, up from the current 2.1 million.

"Already I think we can say it (sewage spilling into public areas) is the exception rather than the rule," he said.

Sherif's third preoccupation has been the preservation of city districts containing Cairo's extensive examples of medieval Islamic architecture.

Since taking office, the governor has moved more than 1,000 families squatting in the ancient alleys of the historic Gamaliyya district into new homes.

Scientists were examining ways to reduce the level of the water table, because surface water was slowly seeping into the foundations and walls of Cairo's ancient heritage.

Sherif, committed to a greening of Cairo, has started to plant a million trees along city streets.

He identified three areas in Cairo, each between 10 and 30 hectares, for gardens and parks.

A major victory in the war against atmospheric pollution was won when the governor's office finally convinced three cement factories on the edge of the city to cap their 25 oven chimneys with industrial filters by next year.

Sherif also plans the compulsory use of filters on all vehicles, along with city checkpoints to monitor progress.

Dust carried by wind from the nearby Mokattam hills was another source of irritation to

Cairene throats and chests.

One possible solution was to pipe water up the hills to irrigate shrubs and grass, but some scientists believed moisture would make the limestone hills crumble.

Sherif was waiting for a final opinion and in the meantime his staff was studying the use of climbing plants to hold the soil in place.

Finally, there was the 24-hour din from a city that never sleeps and where imaginative use of the car horn has become a way of life.

Schools have already been prohibited from using loudspeakers, while stiff penalties await noisy drivers.

"If you're going to change ingrained habits, you have to be firm," said Sherif with a smile.

Randa Habib's
Corner

Keeping a secret

AS a child I loved secrets; kept secrets as well as unvelled secrets. And my schoolmates and I used to share secrets which were supposed to be kept secret. As we, as secret-keepers, were not supposed to repeat quite secret secrets. Somehow, nevertheless, the whole class and even the school would be aware of all secrets by the end of the day...

The Parliament session Tuesday brought back to me school days and reminded me of the pledge of keeping a secret secret. It is a simple formula. When nearly a hundred secret-keepers — deputies and cabinet ministers — meet in a closed session, how can one keep it secret. No sooner that the session adjourned than information started leaking, though in secret. If you don't repeat it I will let you know about it; if you don't quote me by name I will tell you about what went on in the supposedly closed session.

On Wednesday, the newspapers ran big headlines offering enough details about the closed session just to meet the curiosity of those who elected the deputies and who are supposed to stand on the fringes of events. Soon more and more details would emerge. In fact, we would even get details that go beyond the actual events of the session and the secrets are bound to turn into rumours with perhaps more interesting description. And don't you think we have enough of the latter.

In short, one can detect that most successful way for keeping a secret secret is through making it public. By putting the facts straight no one would be eager to discover secrets. So please deputies of the people don't waver away from the truth and let it be known to all. As Abraham Lincoln once said: "Let the people know the truth and the country is safe."

Jardaneh confident

(Continued from page 1)

"Jordan needs a special treatment," he said.

Jardaneh conceded that Jordan, for purposes of meeting IMF stipulations and criteria, maintained a dual system of "a state budget," which excludes the armament fund of the Kingdom, and an "IMF budget," which includes defence allocations. "It's a normal practice," he said. "The IMF doesn't mind."

However, he said, there are differences with the IMF over the projected deficit in the 1990 budget. "IMF terms are tough and difficult," he said, "and they make my life very difficult."

The finance minister disclosed that the principal of the total foreign debts of the Kingdom was revised and set at \$8.06 billion, down from \$8.3 billion as announced earlier. The reduction, he said, was due to the elimination of interest and readjustment.

Jordan's gold reserve — 750,000 ounces — has a market value of \$300 million, and the last sale of 250,000 ounces — when the government of Zaid Rifai was in power — fetched the Kingdom \$80 million, according to the minister.

Jardaneh confirmed that it was "government policy" to sell its shares in newspaper establishments and hotels, but "we are in no hurry."

However, he said, any such sale take into consideration the Amman Financial Market situation and "equal chances will be given to everyone" to acquire the shares. "We will do it stage-by-stage, avoiding any adverse impact on the market," he added.

Foreign investors would be welcome to step in, he said, but "in a selective manner."

Ninety per cent of any capital gain made in such deals would be directly channelled to the budget, and the principal and remainder of the capital gain would be placed at the disposal of the Jordan Finance Corporation to be used for investments in new projects, he said. He estimated government holdings in commercial undertakings at between JD 160 million and JD 180 million.

Jardaneh confirmed that Gulf

Arab states had undertaken to place a total of \$300 million at the disposal of the Central Bank of Jordan for use whenever deemed necessary under a reciprocity arrangement involving dinars. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have already "contributed their shares" of the amount, and unnamed others have not done so, he said.

The finance minister noted that Jordan had managed to bring down its trade deficit to \$1,050 billion in 1989, down from \$1.7 billion in 1988. Imports amounted to \$2,100 million while exports and re-exports totalled \$1,090 billion. "It is a significant achievement," he said. "We hope to further reduce the deficit by \$100 million in 1990," he said.

Asked how he assessed the external impact on Jordan of the ongoing probe into cases of corruption, the minister said he expected it to have a positive effect on Arab aid to the Kingdom, but conceded that the picture was not so clear as far as foreign investments were concerned.

Jardaneh, who assumed office in April 1989 in the government of Sharif Zaid Ben Shaker and retained the portfolio in the cabinet of Mudar Badran in December, squashed rumours that he was resigning. "The very fact that I am meeting you today is an indication that I have no plans to resign any time soon," he told the gathering.

Peres

(Continued from page 1)

If Peres fails to forge a majority from the multitude of small factions in parliament. The 74-year-old Shamir could get a chance to form a government and stay in power.

"We will be trying to keep him (Peres) from forming a narrow government," said Shamir's spokesman Avi Pazner.

Groups on the left will fall in line behind the Labour Party's 39 Knesset members rather than the headline Likud party, leaving the power to make or break a new government in the hands of religious parties holding 18 seats.

As Peres began negotiating with potential partners, support in the Knesset was split 60-60 between the two major parties.

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'Major in a minor key'

LONDON (R) — Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer John Major has wooed voters with a neutral budget but economists complained that it was unlikely to defeat inflation.

Some newspaper editorials said Tuesday's budget failed to tackle serious economic woes which have helped push the government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher way behind the opposition Labour Party in opinion polls.

But other editorials and several business leaders applauded the cautious approach from Major, son of a circus variety star, calling his debut budget imaginative and ingenious.

In Britain's first televised budget speech, Major underlined his commitment to high interest rates to dampen inflation to alleviate the current economic gloom. He warned: "The position will worsen noticeably before it improves."

The budget gave incentives to saving, promoted safety at soccer grounds through tax cuts and offered relief to workplace creches and charities. It also increased duties on cigarettes, alcohol and tobacco.

Labour parliamentarian John Home Robertson summed up his party's attitude, saying: "Misery today and peanuts tomorrow."

Opposition leader Neil Kinnock called it "a bits and pieces budget" and a stop-gap measure.

British economists were also disappointed.

Paul Chertkov, chief currency strategist at Citicorp said: "This budget was a missed opportunity. It is by no means clear with this neutral fiscal stance that 15 per

cent base rates are going to get inflation down as forecast."

The Financial Times in an editorial titled "Major in a minor key" said there was nothing tough about the budget. "This does not look like the budget of a government that seriously intends to lower underlying inflation before the next election."

David Morrison, economist at finance house S.G. Warburg Securities, predicted the budget would not reassure investors.

"For 1990, Britain will be the G-7 country with the lowest growth and the highest inflation. What a bad combination."

Natwest Capital Markets felt the budget was uninspired and disappointing and said in a commentary the conservatives, lagging up to 20 points behind Labour, would struggle to regain a comfortable lead by the next election in two years time.

The government, which has seen violent protests over a new poll tax to replace local property rates, faces an embarrassing election setback in the central England constituency of Mid Staffordshire later this week.

"A landslide victory for Labour is still likely on Thursday," Natwest said in its commentary.

Uproar broke out towards the end of Major's address as he announced a concession designed to ease the impact of a new poll tax coming into force in England and Wales on April 1.

Opposition politicians angrily demanded that it be made retroactive in Scotland, where the tax, a levy on all adults instead of property taxes, has been in force for the past year.

U.S. trade gap widens

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. foreign trade deficit, bloated by a record demand for foreign oil, rose dramatically in January, climbing to about \$9.3 billion, the government said Tuesday.

The Commerce Department said the January deficit was 20.5 per cent larger than December's \$7.7 billion imbalance. Most of the deterioration came from a 44 per cent surge in oil shipments.

The January deficit was an ominous beginning for the new decade. Many analysts believe the United States' foreign trade woes will worsen in coming years as dependence on foreign oil grows.

For January, exports climbed to an all-time high of \$32.1 billion, four per cent above the December level.

However, this gain was swamped by a 7.3 per cent surge in imports, which increased to \$41.3 billion.

The trade deficit, the difference between imports and exports, was the largest since a \$10.1 billion imbalance in November.

"These numbers are pretty much as expected due to the deficit drop in December, which was the lowest in five years. Everyone seemed to realize they couldn't maintain that low level, and so it was expected that there would be an increase in January," said White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater said.

The U.S. trade deficit has been improving for the past two years, falling to \$109 billion last year, down eight per cent from 1988.

But many economists predicted the 1990 deficit could begin rising again because of the oil bill and gains in the value of the dollar. A stronger U.S. currency makes imports cheaper and U.S. products less competitive on overseas markets.

The huge 44 per cent surge in oil imports did not come as a surprise, with analysts blaming the rise on December's record cold weather, which caused oil companies to import heavily in January to restock depleted supplies.

The total volume of oil, 291,278 barrels, was an all-time high, topping a previous record set in August.

Prices shot up to \$20.13 per barrel, pushing the total oil bill to \$5.86 billion, the highest total dollar amount since August 1982, a month when the volume was less but the price per barrel was higher.

The American Petroleum Institute has reported that foreign oil accounted for a record 54 per cent of consumption in January as domestic production fell to its lowest level in a quarter century.

Another factor swelling the deficit in January was a 31 per cent surge in imports of clothing, which totalled \$3.1 billion in January.

Many economists are worried that the deficit will worsen even further in coming months.

China faces 'grave' problem

BEIJING (Agencies) — China faces "grave" budgetary problems this year, the finance minister said Wednesday in announcing a 1990 budget that included spending increases in defence, education and subsidies for insolvent state-run enterprises.

Wang Bingqian, in an address to the national legislature, said the state will have a deficit in 1990 of 8.89 billion yuan (\$1.89 billion), down slightly from 9.5 billion yuan (\$2 billion) in 1989.

If tabulated by Western accounting methods, in which domestic and foreign borrowing are regarded as part of the deficit, the imbalance would be 42.3 billion yuan (\$9 billion), an increase of more than 5 billion yuan (\$1 billion).

Wang said state revenues for 1990 have been set at 323.65 billion yuan (\$68.86 billion), up 10.9 per cent, and spending at 332.54 yuan (\$70.75 billion), up 10.3 per cent.

"The present financial situation remains grave, with many contradictions and great difficulties cropping up in national finance," he told the 2,700 delegates to the annual National People's Congress.

The nation's current economic "downturn, a consequence of 18 months of austerity measures, has reduced revenues and complicated efforts to meet state demands that the budget be balanced, Wang said.

"What is more, in some localities and work units financial procedures became chaotic, supervision and management became lax, budgetary control was loosened and tax evasion, illegal retention of profits, diversion of funds and similar breaches of financial laws and discipline became quite common," he said.

While most departments were being told to cut spending and practice frugality again this year, the military and education were awarded large increases.

National defence was allocated 28.97 billion yuan (\$6.16 billion), an increase of 15.2 per cent over 1989. But Western military analysts say real spending is far greater if peripheral costs are added in.

Defence spending was held down during the 1980s while China concentrated on economic development. But the military was expected to get more money this year because of its increased poli-

tical clout after it played a central role in putting down pro-democracy demonstrations last spring.

Spending on education in a nation with a 20 per cent illiteracy rate was increased 9.8 per cent to 35.1 billion yuan (\$7.5 billion).

Nearly one-third of the state budget, 106.3 billion yuan (\$22.6 billion), will go to subsidies for money-losing enterprises and price rises, "a great drain on the state treasury," Wang said.

The state in 1990 will need 65.76 billion yuan (\$14 billion) to prop up insolvent state-run businesses, up from 60 billion yuan (\$12.7 billion) last year.

Wang said the state, which last year required most workers and factories to buy bonds to help finance public debt, has budgeted 12.4 billion yuan (\$2.6 billion) to pay back individuals, up a steep 9.7 billion yuan (\$2 billion).

Wang said the government will try to increase revenues by raising business tax rates and improving collection of individual income taxes.

Meanwhile, the World Bank has postponed a \$150 million loan to China after being pressured by the United States and other industrial countries on human rights grounds, monetary sources have said.

A World Bank spokesman confirmed the delay but declined to give details. The sources said the

loan will be postponed for several weeks.

The U.S.-led group of industrial states pressured the World Bank for the delay because of a lack of progress in China on human rights since the crackdown on the pro-democracy movement last June.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady told a congressional panel last week that Washington would fight any World Bank loan to China that did not assist "humanitarian goals."

"We are against loans which don't qualify (for basic human needs)," he said.

The bank stopped making new loans to China after the Tiananmen Square crackdown but it did approve two other loans, one for \$30 million in earthquake relief and another for \$60 million for agriculture.

The delayed loan was for re-habilitating roads and waterways. The bank was to have loaned \$100 million and its affiliate, the International Development Association, was to have supplied the balance.

The monetary sources said the United States wanted to see a review of the Chinese economy before agreeing to any large sums for so-called infrastructure lending.

ECONOMIC NEWS BRIEFS

SIB doubles net profit

DAMMAM, Saudi Arabia (R) — The Saudi Investment Bank (SIB) said it made a net profit of about 11 million riyals (\$2.9 million) in fiscal 1989, double that of the previous year. A bank statement published in the Saudi press said operational income recorded an increase of more than 25 per cent at about 76 million riyals (\$20.2 million), compared with 60.5 million riyals (\$16 million) in 1988. Allocations for bad debts were increased to 65 million riyals (\$17.3 million) in 1989 from 55 million riyals (\$14.6 million) the year before. The bank's assets also rose to just over five billion riyals (\$1.3 billion) in 1988, from 4.7 billion riyals (\$1.25 billion) in the preceding year. SIB said it had net profits of 5.5 million riyals (\$1.45 million).

Statoll seeks expansion abroad

OSLO (R) — Norway's state oil firm Statoll says it is seeking to expand abroad through foreign partnerships or possible takeovers. "Becoming international means to us that... Statoll must think in the direction of buying companies as one way to go," Statoll managing director Harald Norvik told a news conference. "I do not say we will do it this year." He added that the strategy might not even be implemented by the mid-1990s. He declined to name any firms Statoll Norway's biggest company, might seek to cooperate with or buy. But Norvik said Statoll needed to grow bigger to meet international competition and that it would look especially at taking over companies with good oil and gas reserves. "Over the coming decade some 30 per cent of Statoll's additional (oil and gas) reserves should come from areas outside Norway's borders," Norvik said.

Foreign debt burdens Poland

BONN (R) — Poland has said that its big foreign debt posed the most serious danger to the Solidarity-led government's radical economic reforms and that rescheduling presented only a temporary solution. Marek Kulczycki, head of Poland's delegation to a 35-nation East-West Economic Conference, said the far reaching reforms introduced at the start of the year to sweep away remnants of communist central planning were already clearly visible. But he said a longer term solution had to be found to cope with the near \$40 billion of foreign debt that Poland had built up with Western governments and commercial banks. "It is still the high indebtedness which is the most serious danger to our programme of economic reforms," said Kulczycki, a director in the ministry for foreign economic relations.

De Beers raises diamond prices

JOHANNESBURG (R) — De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd, the world's biggest diamond producer, has announced that it would raise prices for uncut stones by 5.5 per cent next Monday to cash in on strong demand. The South African mining firm controls some four fifths of world trade in rough, or uncut, diamonds through its London-based Central Selling Organisation (CSO). "With effect from the next sight (sale) on 26th March 1990, the Central Selling Organisation will increase its prices for rough gem diamonds by an average of 5.5 per cent overall," De Beers said in a statement. It noted exports were running at record levels, particularly from manufacturing centres like Israel and India, for polished stones of up to one carat in weight.

Indian budget slows growth

NEW DELHI (R) — Indian Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh's first budget will slow economic growth but is expected to halt growing inflation, a senior finance ministry official has said.

The budget for the year beginning April 1 reduced capital expenditure, imposed heavy taxes and introduced social schemes such as debt relief for farmers.

"The overall impact from the inflationary point of view would be positive. There is a link between inflation and deficit," said Finance Secretary Bimal Jalan, the ministry's top civil servant.

"A very strong effort has been made to contain the deficit. The budget strategy is to keep inflation rise under check," Jalan told reporters, a comment with which business leaders disagreed. They said the budget would be inflationary.

The budget showed a deficit of 72.06 billion rupees (\$4.37 billion), a figure substantially lower than the 1989/90 estimate of 117.50 billion rupees (\$7.12 billion).

The lower deficit signifies the

government's resolve to cut down on expenditure and minimise the effect of the budget's higher taxes on inflation, Jalan said.

Inflation rose to 7.7 per cent in 1989/90 from 5.3 per cent in the previous year and economists predict double digit inflation in 1990/91 unless government spending is curbed.

Jalan said taxes imposed to raise 19.52 billion rupees (\$1.18 billion) in new revenue may have little inflationary effect.

Asked if the budget reduction in capital spending on various schemes would slow down economic growth, Jalan said: "Yes, it will." He did not elaborate.

A pre-budget government survey painted a gloomy picture of the economy and estimated 1989/90 growth in the gross domestic product (GDP), the value of goods and services produced within the country, at four to 4.5 per cent.

The GDP grew 10.4 per cent in the previous year.

The survey said India's balance of payments would be under pressure in the next five years.

Singh warned that hard decisions would have to be taken to prevent India from sliding into a debt trap.

India's total debt is estimated at 690 billion rupees (\$42 billion). Businessmen said the heavy taxes would fuel inflation.

"A significant rise in petroleum prices and a recent hike in rail freight would add to the high cost of transport," said Associated Chambers of Commerce President Viren Shah.

"What has been projected by way of a lower deficit is an accountant's trick," said S.B. Chavan, finance minister in the government of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, which was ousted in November polls.

Chavan said the rural debt waiver would benefit only big farmers as the scheme would be applied to every farm borrower.

He asserted it would cost the government 140 billion rupees (\$8.48 billion) to compensate banks over Singh's promise to forgive loans of up to 10,000 rupees (\$600).

Jalan said that figure was the total debt owed by farmers.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Wednesday, March 21, 1990		
Central Bank official rates		
	Buy	Sell
U.S. dollar	671.0	675.0
Pound Sterling	1071.0	1077.4
Deutschmark	392.1	395.2
Swiss franc	440.6	443.2
French franc	116.3	117.0
Japanese yen (for 100)	435.7	438.3
Dutch guilder	348.8	350.9
Swedish crown	108.5	109.2
Italian lire (for 100)	53.2	53.5
Belgian franc (for 10)	191.2	192.3

HOROSCOPE

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY MARCH 22, 1990

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Unexpected changes coming to you under the heading of financial and material give an indication of just where you are going and how soon you expect to get there. Keep alert.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) If questions arise what friendship to encourage today make it a new-comer. New circumstances with your attachment requires a new attitude.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You can have a wonderful time with two unusually interesting friends. At last you can have a good talk with attachment about partnership matters.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) The head of a venture from a distance can now become your good friend. A good woman offers worthwhile suggestions for your emotional well being.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Fine day for having a good time with friends at inexpensive pleasures. Investigate all means by which you can be happier with your attachment.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Now is your time to invite and entertain long time friends in your own home, but you carefully decide a budget there and stick to it.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Go with friends today to visit charming acquaintances. Accept

the attentions now showered upon you by attachment with gratitude that you show.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You are not quite ready to make that big change in your daily activities. Take that jump you and your mate have long been anticipating.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Now is the time to meet those persons you have long wanted to know. Things are going along well with attachment if you do not stir things up.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Don't put off until a more propitious moment changes at your residence. Spend as much time with attachment as you can at outside recreation for a fine romance.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Take your family now to see relatives and close companions. Include your mate in whatever you do of a social nature.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Welcome persons into your home you have not had there before. Showing more emotion for your mate will have fine results for you both.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Seek out and enjoy unconventional persons as friends now. A good time to be in touch with relative at a distance that you have not seen for a while.

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY MARCH 23, 1990

GENERAL TENDENCIES: A fair day to use your own resourcefulness and special knowledge to eliminate whatever has been left undone and for all the pursuit that are usually connected with the weekend.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Pay as many calls and visits as possible to whom you wish to be allied in the days ahead, and listen to their views for their opinion.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) A very good day for you to analyse your various sources of assets and other benefits and to decide various ways to obtain them.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Your own personal aims should be uppermost in your consciousness today and tonight with good ideas how to best secure them.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) A multitude of personal things can be done to make your health and appearance heightened, then you can get into more mundane things.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Many behind the scenes tasks require your individual attention before you get in touch with friends to let them know when you can make plans to see them.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Whatever your hopes and wishes are, it is necessary you look

at them from a less casual angle, then you can devise the means to obtain them.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Many outside chores demand your attention so get them done as soon as you can for then you are able to make arrangements to gain your personal wishes.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) A day to do whatever you have agreed with one who is in a position to aid you to obtain some worldly extension of your interests.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Some entertainment or recreation appeals to you but don't say "yes" for another that is more in line with what you want can later arise.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Make sure that you are kind and considerate with an associate with whom you have some issue or you can devastate that persons feelings.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Consider thoughtfully what others expect of you in the way of backing up their plans and go as far as you possibly can to do just that.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Consider how you can make your surroundings more attractive so there is more harmony and peace and you can operate more freely in them.

THE Daily Crossword by Fred Toole

ACROSS	1 TV fare	14 156	17 Red River city	20 Author Waugh	23 Golf clubs	26 Hyde Park	29 Sharpshooters	32 Pascale	35 Quoted as	38 Staterooms	41 James Garner	44 Papal	47 vestment	50 one's time	53 Press for	56 Strolling spot	59 Little	62 Hurling	65 Participial	68 Painter Matis	71 Dance music	74 Curry favor	77 Sweeney	80 Thurbred	83 Gambling	86 town	89 Carry on	92 Visitor	95 Trilling	98 Gator's kin	101 Type of poem	104 Church picture	107 Sow's short	110 Kitchen item	113 Senator's home	116 Digits	119 Men with	122 vision	125 Understood	128 DOWN	1 Con game	2 Earthen jar	3 Assort	4 Dicken's "	5 Set of bells	6 Rabbits	7 Shortly	8 Las	9 Letters	10 Smoked	11 herring	12 Crucifixion	13 Insulation	14 Muslim	15 A few	16 Measure of loudness	17 Indians	18 Military student	19 S.A. native	20 Kind of acid	21 Board game	22 USSR city	23 Raveled	24 ones	25 Damn	26 Massage	27 Con game	28 Bubbles	29 Deer's delight	30 AC or DC	31 Submerged	32 Dupes	33 anything...	34 horses	35 Nibbles	36 Blusbonnet	37 In the sky	38 Not any	39 Volume	40 "do	41 Proboscis	42 Nibbles	43 In the sky
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Yesterday's Puzzle Solved

DOWN	1 Con game	2 Earthen jar	3 Assort	4 Dicken's "	5 Set of bells	6 Rabbits	7 Shortly	8 Las	9 Letters	10 Smoked	11 herring	12 Crucifixion	13 Insulation	14 Muslim	15 A few	16 Measure of loudness	17 Indians	18 Military student	19 S.A. native	20 Kind of acid	21 Board game	22 USSR city	23 Raveled	24 ones	25 Damn	26 Massage	27 Con game	28 Bubbles	29 Deer's delight	30 AC or DC	31 Submerged	32 Dupes	33 anything...	34 horses	35 Nibbles	36 Blusbonnet	37 In the sky	38 Not any	39 Volume	40 "do	41 Proboscis	42 Nibbles	43 In the sky
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THE BETTER HALF. By Harris



"It's a new kind of healthy booze! It's made from distilled oat bran."

JUMBLE by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CYDEA	NEQUE	DRIFOL	LIERIX
WHAT THE STAG DID WHEN THE HUNTERS ARRIVED.	Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.	Answer: <input type="text"/> FOR <input type="text"/>	(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: WOVEN SHAKY COELOT HOOKUP
Answer: The boxing ring is no place for this—A SLOW "POKE"

سورة الفاتحة

Americans taste European soccer

BUDAPEST (AP) — The World Cup-bound U.S. team got its first taste of European soccer Tuesday, and it was bitter.

The Americans were overwhelmed 2-0 by an inexperienced Hungarian squad that could have won by five or six goals and showed how much the U.S. team must improve before this summer.

"Mistakes were made and when mistakes are made it usually means a goal," said U.S. striker Peter Vermes. "There could have been more."

Tamas Petres and Zsolt Limperger scored in a one-sided game in which the Hungarians used their superior quickness and ball-handling skills to overpower the visitors.

"Their off-the-ball running was what gave us the most difficulty," said U.S. coach Bob Gansler. "What we are here to learn is what we saw tonight — the speed of play is much different in Europe than we are used to."

Gansler said the game was another step in the development of his team as it approaches the 24-nation World Cup finals in Italy that begin in June.

"This is a fact-finding mission to find out what we have to do," he said. "We still have a lot of games to go. We trust that when the time comes we will get it done."

As 15,000 fans triumphantly waved red, white and green flags, the young Hungarian team kept the ball for long stretches in the American half of the field and took advantage of U.S. sloppiness.

The Hungarians, six of whom were playing their inaugural game or the national team, easily could have won by more. One Hungarian shot went off the crossbar and another off the goal post, while several other chances went astray in front of beleaguered U.S. goalie Tony Meola.

Petres, playing in his first game for the national team, took a pass from Robert Jovan six minutes before halftime and scored the first goal from right in front of Meola. U.S. defender Jimmy Banks was beaten on the pass.

Limperger, who like Petres is 21, scored the other goal midway through the second half from 15 metres out after U.S. defender

John Stollmeyer mistimed a header and the ball rolled free to Limperger.

The lackluster U.S. offense, which scored only six goals in eight World Cup qualifying matches last year, did not get a shot on goal until the 35th minute of the game and showed little spark throughout the contest.

The best scoring chance for the Americans came with six minutes remaining when Vermes, who played last year in Raba Eto, Hungary, slammed a free kick that forced a diving save by Hungarian goalie Istvan Brockhanser.

The game was the first of two the U.S. team is playing in Eastern Europe to prepare for the World Cup finals. The Americans, who qualified for the finals for the first time in 40 years, will play at East Germany March 28.

Hungary did not qualify for the World Cup finals and is undergoing a soccer purge. Kalman Meszoly, who coached the national team in the early 1980s, was back in charge for his first game Tuesday and many of the young players were unknown to the crowd.

Soccer also to be blamed for the Heysel tragedy

BRUSSELS (AP) — The prosecutor in the Heysel riots appeals trial said soccer itself is partly responsible for hooliganism and urged for more penal prosecution of on-field violence, newspapers reported Tuesday.

"When a phenomenon becomes criminal, the authorities must get worried and the public prosecutor must take preventive and — if necessary — repressive measures," prosecutor Oscar Vandemeulebroeck said of violence between players.

The prosecutor is seeking tougher sentences against 10 of 14 convicted Britons, who were given three-year jail terms, half of which were suspended, for their part in the 1985 Heysel stadium riots that killed 39 soccer fans.

He was more lenient for the four convicted fans who came to Brussels for the appeals trial, which started last week. He asked

that their sentence not be increased from what they received after last year's trial.

Vandemeulebroeck claimed that sociological and psychological studies have shown a "direct

link between violence on the field and in the stands."

"Dirty players should know that there will have to count on more than just sanctions of the soccer federations," he said.

Fleurian upsets Becker

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida (AP) — Boris Becker says it's a good time for him to be in a slump.

The second-ranked West German was eliminated by Jean Fleurian 7-6 (7-3), 6-1 in Tuesday's third round of the international players championships.

"I am the kind of player who always was a couple of lows during the year," Becker said. "If they are now, I am glad, because it means they are not going to be during Wimbledon or the French Open."

Fleurian, a Frenchman who is ranked 46th, said Becker appeared to be "sleepy."

"From the beginning I felt he wasn't playing good," Fleurian said. "I had a chance. I knew today was the day to do it, because I knew that tomorrow he'd be good again."

Another upset winner was Javier Sanchez of Spain, who beat no. 4 Brad Gilbert 6-3, 6-7 (14-12), 7-6 (7-4). Gilbert delayed his defeat by surviving five match points, four in the second set.

Top-ranked Ivan Lendl advanced to the fourth round by beating Marcello Filippini 6-0, 6-2, no. 5 seed Andre Agassi swept Jan Gunnarsson 6-1, 6-3.

Women's seeds advancing to the quarterfinals included no. 1 Gabriela Sabatini, no. 3 Monica Seles and no. 4 Manuela Maleeva.

Sabatini, who has yet to lose a set in nine matches this month, beat Susan Sloane 6-2, 6-2; Seles swept no. 13 Rosalyn Fairbank 6-3, 6-4, and Maleeva eliminated no. 10 Raffaella Reggi 6-1, 3-6, 6-2.

Fleurian had trailed Becker 3-1 in the first set Monday when play was suspended because of rain.

"I was supposed to take my plane flight home Monday night, and I was really mad because I didn't make it," the drol Fleurian said Tuesday. "So I made it for tonight. Unfortunately I won, and now I have to cancel it again."

Fleurian said he was being realistic, not pessimistic, in booking a flight before the match.

"When you play Boris, you'd better get ready to go back home."

Fleurian faced three set points when trailing 5-3 in the first set but rallied to win the game. He then broke Becker's serve to reach 5-5, won the final four points in the tiebreaker and captured the second set in just 34 minutes.

The players waited out the rain for six hours Monday before the match was postponed, and Becker said he had trouble regaining his concentration.

"My mind wasn't on the court," Becker said. "I don't know where it was. I'll have to find it."

Fleurian, 24, who has beaten only two other players ranked in the top 20, called it the biggest victory of his career. He is the lowest-ranked player to beat Becker since then-no. 67 Thierry Tulasne, another Frenchman, in May 1988.

Zurbriggen, Walliser say farewell to skiing

ARE, SWEDEN (AP) — Pirmin Zurbriggen ended his career in the limelight. Maria Walliser sneaked out almost unnoticed.

While Swedish newspapers devoted full pages to Zurbriggen's farewell race, Walliser left Sweden for home as any other skier racer after the women's World Cup downhill finale was scratched because of bad weather.

The two Swiss stars, who won a combined six World Cup overall titles in the 1980s, had no regrets about retiring.

"It's important for me to quit at the top," said Zurbriggen, perhaps the greatest all-rounder in alpine ski history.

He did win the season's last two super G races, including one in Norway a week ago, then finished 11th in his World Cup farewell race.

Walliser, 26, who won virtually everything but an Olympic gold medal in her 11-year career, is looking forward to quit the sport that made her a millionaire.

At last, she'll have more time for golf, her favourite sport.

"I really don't feel sad because I know exactly what I'm doing," Walliser said.

"I think I was professional until the end of my career."

There was talk about Walliser getting into acting after the World Championships in 1987 and 1989. Her attractive looks and sometimes agonising openness made her a media darling.

"I think I could get into acting," Walliser said. "That would be a really different life."

"But first of all I want to do

some promotion for some products. Maybe not too near ski racing. I want to quit really. You will see what's going on."

Walliser, a two-time former overall champion in 1986-87 and winner of three world titles and three Olympic medals, was fourth overall this year.

She was consistent in three of the four disciplines, placing fifth in the downhill and the super G standings and sixth in the giant slalom.

Zurbriggen may still have young legs after 10 tough years on the tour, but his back still hurts from a bad fall at Val d'Isere in France, in 1986.

"I don't think I'll need surgery, but I have a lot of problems when I sleep," he said. "My back hurts all the time when I'm in bed."

Zurbriggen, who married Monique Julien last September, is looking forward to a honeymoon after the ski season.

"We just had one week together after we were married," he said. "But we'll have plenty of time now."

Before the honeymoon, Zurbriggen is planning a farewell race at Crans Montana, Switzerland.

Several greats, including Franz Klammer, Gustavo Thoni and Alberto Tomba, are expected to attend.

"Ingemar Stenmark hasn't replied to my invitation yet, but I hope he will be there," said Zurbriggen, who's second all-time behind.

The Swede with 40 World Cup wins, including 11 combined "paper" races.

"Ingemar was a great champion. His results throughout the years were fantastic," added Zurbriggen.

Stenmark, the Swede who is the greatest slalom and GS skier ever with a record 86 World Cup wins and three overall crowns, retired last year.

Zurbriggen tied Thoni's all-time record before the Scandinavian swing of the World Cup season, clinching his fourth overall at Veysonnaz in his native Switzerland.

He won eight World Cup specialty titles in his career in addition to one Olympic gold medal and four world championships, including one combined title.

For Zurbriggen, who also won the overall title in 1984, 1987 and 1988, the 1987 worlds at Crans-Montana were the highlight of his career. Crans-Montana is not far away from Saas-Almagell, Zurbriggen's hometown.

"It was very satisfying to do so well despite all the pressure from the home fans," recalled Zurbriggen, who won two golds (GS and super G) and two silver medals (downhill and the combined).

Winning this year's overall championship can't be compared to the other ones, Zurbriggen said.

"Alberto Tomba (of Italy) missed so many races and Marc Girardelli has been out since December," Zurbriggen said.

Girardelli, a three-time overall champion from Austria who competes for Luxembourg, sustained a hip and kidney bruising in a fall during a super G race in Italy before Christmas.

Princess Anne says Olympics too big

WEMBLEY, ENGLAND (AP) — The Olympics have become too big for their own good, according to Princess Anne, one of Britain's two international Olympic Committee members.

The Princess, who also is president of both the British Olympic Association and the International Equestrian Federation, said the size of the games is one of the most difficult decisions facing the IOC and other international

bodies.

"The biggest danger to the movement is that it is getting too big in sheer weight of numbers," she said. "Other sports will become more popular in terms of numbers and everyone will want to be involved in the Olympics. Some very hard decision-making will happen very shortly."

The IOC is studying ways of reducing or limiting the size of the Olympics, which are expected to attract more than 10,000 athletes to Barcelona in 1992.

It has barred demonstration sports after the '92 winter and summer games and is expected to announce further restrictions when the 1996 summer Olympics are awarded in September.

Princess Anne, daughter of Queen Elizabeth, made her re-

marks Tuesday at a conference of the sports council, which oversees amateur sports in Britain.

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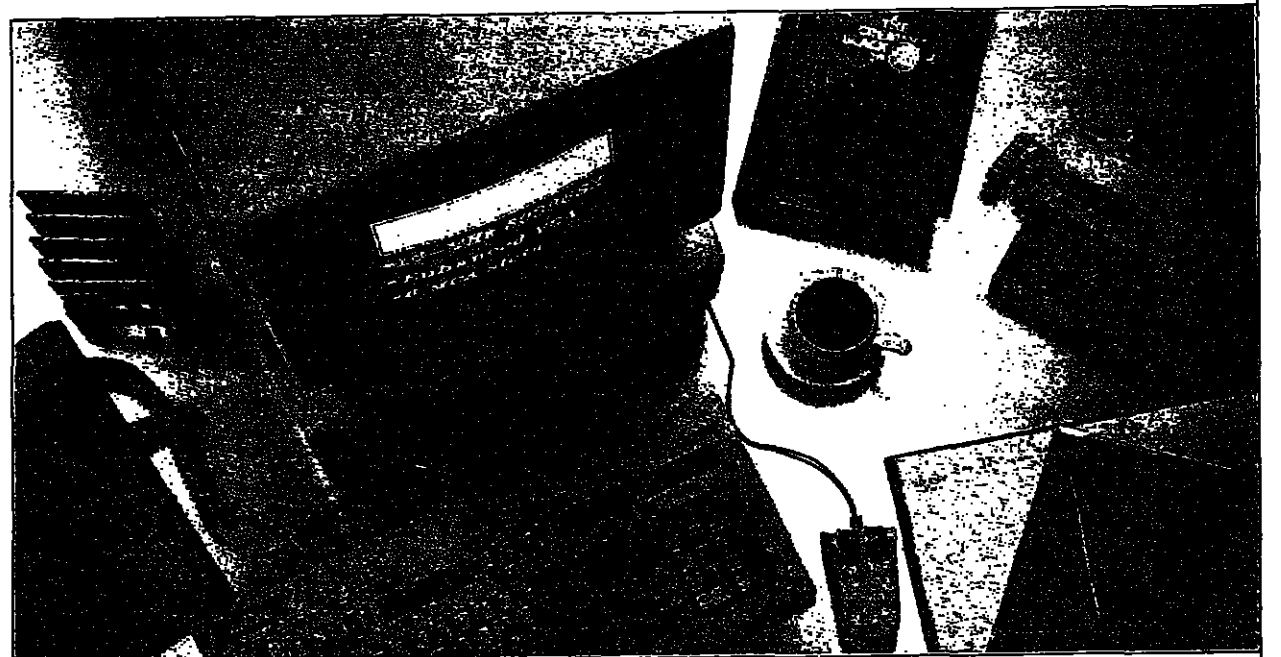
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♦ A Q83
♦ A K Q J

The bidding:
West North East South
Pass Pass Pass 3 NT
Pass Pass Pass
Opening lead: Six of ♠

In the inaugural bridge match between the two legislative chambers, the House handily defeated the Senate. Early next year, the winners will play the British Parliament in the first Transatlantic Governmental Challenge. Almost all the players on both teams were Republicans. We are not sure whether an infusion of new Democrat blood in the Senate would reverse the outcome of next year's match.

Both teams declared three no

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Namibia becomes independent

WINDHOEK, Namibia (Agencies) — The World's newest nation celebrated its birth Wednesday with all-night parties, tribal dancing and parades before swearing in ex-guerrilla leaders as ministers of the new government.

Some 25,000 Namibians cheered wildly at a sports stadium as the South African flag was lowered in Africa's last colony early Wednesday. It was replaced by the red, green and blue banner of newly independent Namibia.

"Africa's last colony is from this hour liberated," President Sam Nujoma said in his inaugural address.

Moments earlier, U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar had sworn in the former guerrilla leader who fought for 23 years to end rule by neighbouring South Africa.

As a fireworks display lit the sky, Namibians began impromptu parties throughout the capital of Windhoek and car horns blared through the night.

"This is beautiful. We are all thrilled. We have waited so long for this day," said Olga Basson as she watched the gold and red fireworks.

President F.W. de Klerk of South Africa, who held his hand across his heart as he watched his nation's flag being lowered, called for an end to violence in southern Africa.

"I stand here tonight as an advocate for peace. The season for violence has passed for Namibia and the whole of southern Africa," De Klerk said.

"It is above all a moment for hope. Hope that the future of this vast and beautiful land will bring peace," he said.

The new government gathered Wednesday morning at the legislative building on a Windhoek hilltop to be sworn in and become the new National Assembly.

Forty-one of the 72 members belong to the South-West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), the guerrilla movement that waged a 23-year war against South African rule and then won last November's U.N.-supervised elections.

Seven parties, ranging from black Marxists to right-wing whites, are represented in the assembly.

The assembly has written a democratic, Western-style constitution that has earned high praise both inside the country and from abroad.

De Klerk has pledged to end South Africa's apartheid system of racial segregation and the date chosen for the Namibian independence ceremony was rich in symbolic meaning for his country.

It marked the 30th anniversary of the "Sharpeville massacre," when 69 unarmed demonstrators were shot and killed in South Africa while protesting racial segregation laws in a black township South of Johannesburg.

Sharpeville was the turning point for the African National Congress (ANC), which broke with decades of nonviolent protest to fight against South Africa's white-run government.

"The day was chosen as a sign of solidarity not only for the people of Namibia, but also with the people of South Africa," said Hifikepuno Pohamba, home affairs minister in the new government.

Among those attending the ceremony were U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, the leaders at least 12 other African nations; Yasser Arafat, the chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO); and the foreign ministers of Britain, West Germany, Indonesia and Romania.

The leaders and foreign secretaries used the occasion for behind-the-scenes consultations throughout the day.

The huge, arid territory of 1.3 million people on Africa's south-west coast was a German colony until it was captured by South Africa during World War I.

Many Namibians expressed hope the new nation would solve past racial differences and overcome the economic and political problems facing many poor African nations.

"Other African countries have had disappointments after independence. I hope we have learned from those economic and political mistakes," said students Simon Ekjanjo.

Some whites expressed concern about the new black government, but said they wanted to support the new nation.

South Africa agreed in December 1988 to grant independence to Namibia under a regional peace treaty that also calls for Cuba to withdraw its 50,000 soldiers from Angola by mid-1991.

South Africa retains control of Walvis Bay, Namibia's only deep-water port. The city was a British colony before Germany occupied Namibia. South Africa says the port is part of its territory, but Namibia is demanding that Walvis Bay be incorporated into its boundaries.

The U.N. chief said that despite frustrations and setbacks, the process had "fully vindicated the reputation and effectiveness of the United Nations". U.N. supervision of the transition began in near-disaster last April when hundreds of SWAPO fighters were killed by South African troops.

Peres de Cuellar hailed the successful agreement on a constitution in an atmosphere of reconciliation as "a remarkable lesson to the whole world in the effectiveness of democratic procedures."

"Few nations will have reached independence with the degree and breadth of international goodwill and support which Namibia now enjoys," he said.

A cheer went up from the crowd of 20,000 when he said he looked forward to Namibia joining the U.N. as its 160th member.

He also promised to organise an international conference to pledge funds for the new state.

Nujoma's first speech as president avoided bitterness and praised De Klerk for his "act of statesmanship" in finally giving Namibia its freedom and expressing the hope for similar developments in South Africa itself.

Namibian government sworn in

WINDHOEK (AP) — Former guerrilla leaders were sworn in Wednesday as ministers of the government after the world's newest nation celebrated its birth with all-night parties, tribal dancing and parades.

Hans Berger, chief justice of the supreme court, swore in members of the 72-member constituent assembly that wrote the Western-style constitution as the republic's National Assembly later Wednesday.

U.S.-educated Mose Tjitemero, a member of the dominant South-West Africa People's Organisation, was elected speaker of the house. A coat of arms was adopted, showing the nation's flag, flanked by two oxen on their hind legs, with an eagle above, and the Namibian motto: "Unity, Liberty, Justice."

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The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Tuesday congratulated Namibia on its independence and invited the country to become the 51st member of the group.

Namibian independence was the "crowning of decades of unremitting struggle by the OAU against colonialism and racism," OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim said in a message to Nujoma.

"The OAU looks forward to welcoming the new nation in its fold as the 51st member of the organisation," he said.

Baker's plan to visit South African President F.W. de Klerk in Cape Town later this week, saying it sends an inaccurate message that the South African government has made meaningful changes.

However, Mandela's colleague, Walter Sisulu, the second highest-ranking ANC official inside South Africa, said he had changed plans to fly to London Wednesday so that he could meet Baker in South Africa Friday.

Mandela's praise of U.S. President George Bush and former President Ronald Reagan for helping to ease world tensions did not extend to American policy toward South Africa.

The African National Congress, the main black group fighting minority white rule in South Africa, has long condemned Reagan's policy of "constructive engagement" toward South Africa, which involved continued ties in order to exert influence.

ANC leaders have said they can communicate better with the Bush administration, although they still disagree with some of its policies toward the South African government.

Mandela was to meet Baker at his temporary residence, but at the last minute he cancelled and asked the senior U.S. cabinet member to come to him. Baker agreed and Mandela met him in the driveway and apologized for the change.

Mandela had been meeting with Shevardnadze for more than an hour, and the Soviet Foreign Minister left moments before Baker arrived.

After the meeting, Mandela told reporters: "We had very fruitful discussions, and as you would expect, there were differences. But I would like you to concentrate on the friendship that exists between the ANC and the government, the Congress and the people of the United States."

After his meeting with Mandela, Shevardnadze said through an interpreter, "I understand very important negotiations will begin between the ANC and the government and that these negotiations will bring very important results and we want it to happen like this."

Both men and women responded, crowding the tiny office to fill in applications stating their military experience and availability on short notice.

"I just want to do some good for free Lithuania," said a woman about 30 years old.

Many of the volunteers are former Soviet soldiers who "say they consider themselves Lithuanian and want to serve in the Lithuanian army," said Ludwiga Pociuniene, who was taking applications in another office at the parliament building.

She dug out one letter written by a soldier from Kanous, who said he fled his army unit in Moscow after being beaten senseless and hospitalized. He was later refused care for severe headaches.

The youth said his officer told him, "Lithuanians must hang themselves."

Pociuniene said the Lithuanian police were under great pressure from Moscow to arrest the deserters, but the new Lithuanian parliament has asked them not to obey the Kremlin command.

In February, even before independence, Lithuania's parliament ordered state prosecutors to prevent the transfer and filing of charges against Lithuanian soldiers who had to escape unbearable conditions in the Soviet Union, according to the Lithuanian review newspaper.

Sharpeville was a turning point for the African National Congress.

Some factories and shops in the south-eastern industrial cities of East London and Port Elizabeth were forced to close when workers failed to show up. Some businesses closed and gave workers a paid holiday in a show of support.

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Lithuanians flee Soviet military

VILNIUS, USSR (AP) — Algis Bernatavicius broke ranks with the Red Army and joined hundreds of other Lithuanians who deserted after their Baltic republic declared itself independent.

"They accused us of being saboteurs," he said Tuesday, one day after waking out on his unit near Moscow. "They called us Germans and Nazis."

"There is no turning back now," said his friend, 19-year-old Valdas Grigalunas, who had just left his post with the northern fleet.

For the hundreds of Lithuanian youths who have fled the Soviet military in the 10 days since their small republic declared itself sovereign, there indeed seems to be no turning back.

The new Lithuanian government is backing the youths' decisions to return home and trying to negotiate their security, said Deputy Prime Minister Kazimieras Motieka.

But the Soviet military has said it will use force to ship the deserters back to their units and presumably military justice — if the conflict is not resolved by Saturday.

On Tuesday night, police were seen checking the passports of young men boarding the train from Moscow to Lithuania, apparently looking for deserters.

Bernatavicius and Grigalunas were interviewed as they debated signing up for a new Lithuanian Volunteer Force, which officials said would be used as customs and frontier guards.

Grigalunas was still officially on leave, but said he was not likely to leave his homeland to return to harsh life in the Soviet Armed Forces, which Lithuanians consider an army of occupation.

Fifty years ago, Lithuania and the other two Baltic republics, Latvia and Estonia, were forcibly annexed by the Soviet Union.

The Baltic republics have been complaining since their drive for independence began two years ago that their draftees were being harassed, tortured or killed by soldiers and officers offended by their desire for freedom. In one celebrated case, a young Baltic conscript machine-gunned eight soldiers and claimed it was self-defence against a gang rape.

Bernatavicius said insults forced him and 13 other Lithuanians from his unit to desert. He said it was not difficult; he simply changed into civilian clothes and went home.

Lithuanian officials said they intend to set up border and customs forces to show the world's governments that Lithuania controls its territory and should be formally recognised as independent.

So far, no foreign country has officially recognised Lithuania as independent and Moscow has warned it will not tolerate a change in customs enforcement at the border.

The Soviet Union has tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of troops stationed in Lithuania, whose Baltic port of Klaipeda is extremely valuable to the Soviet navy.

Signs in the capital of Vilnius said the Sajudis People's Front, the nationalist movement that dominates the Lithuanian government, was handing registration of men between ages of 19 and 40 who were ready to serve voluntarily in defence of the state.

Both men and women responded, crowding the tiny office to fill in applications stating their military experience and availability on short notice.

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Lithuania protests Soviet army exercises

VILNIUS, USSR (Agencies) — The Supreme Council of Lithuania opened debate Wednesday on the structure of its new government after sending a protest to the Kremlin against Soviet military manoeuvres in the Baltic Republic.

Lithuanian Prime Minister Kazimieras Prunskiene sent a telegram to President Mikhail Gorbachev Tuesday night complaining that the recent military operations were creating unnecessary tensions.

"The people of Lithuania are deeply disturbed about the actions of the Soviet Armed Forces. The intense mobilisation of armoured vehicles and tanks, the intensified flights of military air force planes, and unauthorised sorties into Lithuanian territory by paratroopers involved in intelligence activities," she said in the cable.

Mrs. Prunskiene said the Lithuanian parliament had not been notified in advance of the manoeuvres, nor on the status of the Soviet army in Lithuania.

"Representatives from USSR ministries and agencies arrive in Lithuania and act without contacting the government of Lithuania," she complained in the telegram addressed to Gorbachev and other top Soviet officials.

In her cable, Mrs. Prunskiene called on the Kremlin to discuss the presence of troops and other issues. "The government is convinced that there is a sound basis for coming to mutually beneficial understanding and for discussing issues of common interest in a calm and rational manner," she said.

The small Baltic republic, which declared its independence on March 11, was quiet Tuesday. There was no sign of Soviet troop movements.

Officials said there were no signs of an economic blockade in retaliation for the declaration of independence and no violence that might be related to sovereignty.

"We are still receiving gas and oil," Lithuania's two most critical imports from the Soviet Union, said Mrs. Prunskiene, an economist who was elected Prime Minister Saturday.

On Wednesday, the legislature began a debate on defining the structure of its new government and specifically whether to trim the number of ministries 40 to 15 or 21.

Lithuanian officials said Tuesday that there were no plans to arm the border force. Mrs. Prunskiene said the government hoped to have 37 border posts installed within 10 days.

where a head constable in the state police force and two civilian government staffers, according to sources who spoke on condition of not being identified further.

The killings occurred when curfew was relaxed during daytime hours Tuesday to enable people to buy food and conduct business.

After the curfew was imposed, government forces launched a series of overnight raids in an effort to flush out the militants.

Mosques blared calls for people to awaken and take to the streets in an effort to thwart the searches.

In Lahore, Pakistani Premier Benazir Bhutto Tuesday accused India of fuelling problems in Indian Kashmir by trying to stamp out a Muslim revolt through force of arms.

Speaking at a joint news conference, both heads of state said they recognised Lithuania's right to self-determination but urged both Moscow and the newly-elected leaders of the Soviet republic to settle their differences at the negotiating table.

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Meanwhile Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze said Tuesday that Moscow would not use force against the independence movement in Lithuania, an assurance welcomed by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker.

The two ministers, in Windhoek to celebrate Namibia's independence, met for three-and-a-half hours and both described their talks as wide ranging and positive.

"The minister made it very clear to me that they are hopeful that questions involving Lithuania will be handled by dialogue," Baker said at an impromptu joint news conference afterwards.

"He said once again, as he has done before, that force would not be the solution to the problem as far as the Soviet Union is concerned."

Washington's concern about the situation in Lithuania and its fellow Baltic republics of Latvia and Estonia mounted after Gorbachev gave his government new powers to reverse Lithuania's declaration of independence.

This was coupled with reports of Soviet troop movements in Lithuania and Soviet military aircraft flying over Lithuanian cities.

But Shevardnadze said there had been no unusual deployment of Soviet forces and Baker said there was "no reason that we know of not to take him at his word."

In Stockholm Baltic exile groups and opposition parties Tuesday demanded that Sweden rally around Lithuania's struggle to break away from the Soviet Union.

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